SEASONAL GREETINGS TO ALL EAGLE TIMES READERS

EAGLE Times

Vol. 22 No. 4 Winter, 2009

The Quarterly Journal of the Eagle Society

EAGLE Times

Vol 22 No 4 Winter 2009

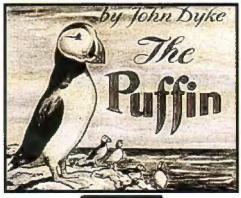
Production Team:

Editor in Chief:	**Howard Corn**
Pre-production layout:	**Tony Cowley**
Sub Editor:	**David Gould**
Final DTP layout & Cover:	**Will Grenham**
Membership Secretary:	**Keith Howard**
Social Secretary:	**Nigel McMurray**
Research:	**Adrian Perkins**

Annual Subscription : U.K. £23, Overseas £34 (In £s Sterling please)
Subs. to: Keith Howard, 25A Station Rd. Harrow Middlesex HA1 2UA

CONTENTS

1. Editorial
2. Artists at home
8. Nature in *Eagle* - John Dyke
12. T*reasure,* John Worsley and 'Wee Willy Winkie'
16. Dimworthy & Co. - part 2
19. *Spaceship Away* Day
20. PC49 - The Case of the Purple Paint
24. The Late Jack Daniel
26. Under the 1950s Christmas Tree
28. 'Nowhere' is not quite what it seems!
30. Is There Anybody There?
33. Christmas *Eagle*s
39. Postbag
40. *Eagle* Autographs
42. Gerry Embleton, part 2
47. *Eagle Annnual of the 1960s* - review
48. An *Eagle* Wordsearch
49. Pop Music in *Eagle* Times



The Puffin - John Dyke
Dan Dare and The Mekon - Gerry Embleton
Wee Willie Winkie - John Worsley
Christmas Eagle, 1959

The views expressed in *Eagle Times* are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the journal or its production team.

Original contents © *Eagle Times* and originators.

Any © material from the original *EAGLE* Magazine or elsewhere is reproduced from members' collections, for the purpose of historical and/or critical reference, not for commercial gain.

Publication Dates
31st March, 30th June,
30th September, 14th December

Eagle Times on the web:
http://eagle-times.blogspot.com/

EAGLE ARTISTS AT HOME

Alan Vince recalls his visits during the 1970s and 1980s to the homes of much-loved EAGLE illustrators Frank Hampson, Ron Embleton, Keith Watson, Frank Humphris, John Worsley, Peter Jackson and Don Lawrence.

Long before I walked through the front door of Bayford Lodge, I had, as a schoolboy, imagined it as a "chocolate box" cottage. The name "Bayford Lodge", on a letter from Joan Porter in 1956, had made me think of a bungalow with, perhaps, a colourful front garden and an old-fashioned interior. When I actually saw the building for real I couldn't have been more wrong! Of course by 1974 Frank and Dorothy only occupied the ground floor of a once bustling 'Dan Dare' studio complex. Don's studio was now the bedroom, Eric's and Keith's room was now the living/dining room and long gone were all the models and photographic extras. At least Frank's studio was still there but, early on, he would only let me have a quick peep at it. On the door to his room was fixed a small model of an imp or devil but I never did ask what that was supposed to mean!

It was clear that the Hampsons were not living in the lap of luxury; they were "comfortable" but both of them had jobs and I did feel very much at home in their company. To me it was sad that there was nothing about to recall those 'Dan Dare' years but Frank seemed to prefer it that way. It wasn't until later, when he got his award and a large numbers of originals back, that he framed these memories and hung them on the walls. One problem that Frank and Dorothy had, being on the ground floor, was from flooding from a burst pipe in the flat above. They got back from a short holiday in Paris only to find everything well and truly soaked – carpets, furniture, the lot. Luckily none of Frank's treasured artwork was damaged.

Although my original visit to Frank was a one -off as I had no idea if he would want to see me again, he and Dorothy said (as I left them that day in January 1974) that I would be most welcome back anytime. That meant so much and of course, I took them up on their offer. Mentioning that Dorothy had a job recalls

Ron Embleton at home

a day when she was asked to give some work experience to a young man who turned out to be Keith Watson's son John!

The visit to Ron Embleton's Bournemouth home came about by a couple of lucky breaks. I had written to Ron in the sixties but never had a reply. These letters were usually sent c/o *EAGLE* or his agent. Ron admitted that he never got them but one sent via *Penthouse* did get to him. I was also to learn that my letter (and invite to him) came right in the middle of a short and unusual quiet spell in Ron's workload. Ron had offered to put me up overnight but would "have to kick me out early the next day as he had a mountain of work to do!"

Frank Humphris at work

I arrived at the impressive mock-tudor house in the afternoon late in 1975 and a beaming Ron opened the door to me. We sat down in his front room and began a solid 12 hours of talking, interrupted only by his wife Liz coming home, the arrival of Andrew Skilleter and a lovely dinner laid on by Liz. I was shown Ron's compact studio and the attic, full of old originals (but not one of 'Wulf the Briton'). Everywhere on the walls were examples of Ron's paintings covering many subjects. He was also proud of his garden and spent as much time as he could keeping it tidy. Liz spent a lot of her time doing charity work but was always on hand to pose for her husband and keep the accounts up to date.

When I looked at my watch it was 3 am. Andrew Skilleter had long disappeared into the night bemoaning the fact that Frank Hampson had used visuals to produce 'Dan Dare' artwork. Ron's wife had called it a day which left Ron and me still chatting away like mad. Ron looked at me and said "I think we had better get some rest." I agreed and was shown up to my room for the night. It was hard to get to sleep as my mind was full of the conversation I had been having with one of the most gifted and famous strip illustrators of all time.

Next morning, bright and early, came a knocking on the bedroom door, it was Ron in his dressing gown and carrying a tray on which was a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits. "I'm sorry I can't be a *Penthouse* Pet" joked Ron "but this is all I can manage!" We later met up in his front room and a taxi was booked to take me to the railway station.

As with Frank Hampson, Ron was kind enough to invite me back a few times and keep in touch by letter or telephone. Always the perfect host Ron loved life and, it could be argued, worked too hard. His talent and ability to have many jobs on the go at any one time meant his "free" time was more special to him and Liz. When he died in February 1988 we lost such a gifted artist. Some years later after his death Liz admitted to me that she still finds memories of Ron dotted about their home and she still has his paintings on the walls.

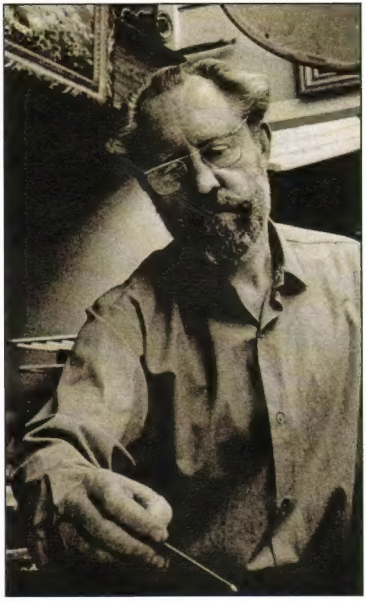
Another long serving *EAGLE* artist I had always wanted to meet was Frank Humphris. While still a schoolboy I had seen two of his (newly delivered) 'Riders of the Range' pages in Ellen Vincent's office at Hulton House. As most of us know, the original artwork always looks so much more stunning than the printed version - which was pretty good too. A chance meeting with Frank at a comic convention in London led to a lot of correspondence between us and an open invitation to visit him at his Middlesex home.

I had, at that time, produced a few "features" for IPC/Fleetway and had a chance to visit their artwork storage warehouse in Southwark Street, just down the road from Kings Reach Tower. In 1982 I was to visit this towering office block again when working freelance for David Hunt. A lot of artwork stored by IPC was from publications like *Look and Learn* but I did find a very few *EAGLE* boards, some of which I was allowed to borrow for the *EAGLE* convention in 1980. Among the mixed bag of papers were a number of Frank Humphris' 'Riders of the Range' strips. My first thought was to "rescue" them for Frank to have back, as he only had one page from all those years of hard work. That page was his famous depiction of

Custer's Last Stand. I was told that if I presented a letter from Frank saying I could collect the artwork on his behalf I could take as many as I could carry. Here it is worth recalling how different was the attitude towards Humphris and the "excuses" given to Frank Hampson on the fate of his artwork.

While Frank Humphris didn't want the artwork back I did sell it for him and he was more than pleased with the cheques I sent. I even presented a couple of pages to Charles Chilton. Sadly the next time I tried to collect more 'Riders of the Range' boards I was told they were being batched up for "possible further use".

With plans for the *EAGLE* convention looming I now had another reason to visit Frank, eager to get him to attend the event with script writer Charles Chilton. Frank Hampson had spoken about Frank Humphris in glowing terms and called him his good friend, saying that he really "lived" the western strip he drew for so many years. "He was out there", said Hampson, "riding the range himself!" So in 1979 I made plans to call in on Frank Humphris and view his studio. It was to be another ambition I wanted to fulfil and one long overdue.



John Worsley at work

Just opposite Frank's home was a park and it was here that I bumped into him. My brother had dropped me off and taken our mother and her next-door neighbour off on a trip to Hampton Court, while I called in on Frank. Like Ron Embleton (who enjoyed a brisk walk along the coast of Bournemouth before starting his day's work at the drawing board) Frank Humphris liked to walk, weather permitting, in the nearby park to "clear his head". We made our way back to his house and I was introduced to his wife Margaret. I had been invited for lunch but, as this was some time before it was ready, Frank showed me his studio.

I had heard, either from Frank himself or Frank Hampson, that a large part of his treasured western collection had been stolen following a break-in but he had either got some of it back or had to replace it. All around his studio were guns, rifles, Indian headdresses and his own paintings of Wild West subjects. There were quite a few dotted about downstairs too. Many of these paintings had appeared in print and were regarded as classic portrayals of famous Indian chiefs like Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the Face. One framed original that caught my eye and was not a Western subject was a pastel drawing of Christ. It showed the figure with a crown of thorns, hands tied and being mocked by the Romans. Frank told me he had drawn that particular piece of artwork while still a student. I could only reflect that *EAGLE* certainly knew the best artists to draw their strips!

During lunch Frank chatted modestly about his work and I made sure he would agree to visit the *EAGLE* convention the following spring. We had already secured Charles Chilton so it was essential to have the best 'Riders of the Range' artist there too. Frank Humphris, like Frank Hampson and Robert Ayton, had illustrated a large number of Ladybird books and he was kind enough to send me a few "roughs" of his illustrations to show how he worked on each painting. All in all it was another lovely day spent in the company of an artist I had long admired. A real gentleman.

My contact with Keith Watson had begun in 1962 when Keith first started illustrating 'Dan Dare' (in line and wash) on his own. He had been kind enough to reply to my many letters and was, as he put it, "flattered" to receive compliments in his effort to revive Frank Hampson's original look to the strip. While he was always very modest about his own talent he was also very proud of his association with Frank Hampson and considered him the best artist and writer in the world of strip illustration. When I was on a visit to Bayford Lodge, following Frank's Yellow Kid award in 1975, Frank was keen to show me the handwritten letter he had received from Keith congratulating him on the award. I had lost touch with Keith for a few years so got his new address and dropped him a line. Not long after that Brian Lewis

Keith Watson "at home" with wife Beverly and children Lois and John - a KW futuristic vision for the SSI Handbook 1980

Frank Hampson and Alan

had brought Keith along to an SSI meeting in London and (at long last) I was able to meet the 'Dan Dare' artist face to face.

Keith now lived in Cheam, Surrey, and was very much a home-loving husband and father. He had an organ in his front room which he loved to play for relaxation. His studio, like those of most artists, was an upstairs converted bedroom. His drawing board was one handmade by his late father and which he treasured all his working life. He did allow me into that studio a couple of times but, usually, we just chatted in his front room or had a bite to eat in his kitchen. Once we got so carried away with talking that Keith forgot to go and collect his wife Beverly from work and she arrived home in a very bad mood! Keith disappeared, trying to console her, while I just felt very, very guilty. Thankfully Beverly and I are still friends.

Once Keith had been introduced to the SSI he became a regular visitor to the monthly meetings held in London and even got voted onto the society's committee. It was always nice to meet up with him but I still managed a few visits to his home, once to deliver a batch of his artwork "salvaged" from Fleetway vaults and another time to help him colour a 'Thunderbirds' strip. Sadly most of the artwork I had found, with no little thanks to David Hunt, was of Keith's earlier line and wash pages. But he seemed very happy to see me again. A large number of his really outstanding colour pages were once in the possession of Roger Dean, who had been able to release a good number of artboards from IPC when he was producing his reprint books for Dragons Dream. In his front room in Brighton were pages of Bellamy, Humphris, Aitchison, Hampson and two boxes of Keith Watson. I mentioned to Dean that Keith would love to see these originals and his reply was "If Keith wants to collect them he is welcome to visit me." I got the impression that Mr Dean was only too pleased to help artists get back their long-lost artwork. Sadly, Keith never took up Roger Dean on his offer.

Two artists who had proved harder to meet with were 'PC49' illustrator John Worsley and Peter Jackson, who had worked for both *EAGLE* and *Express Weekly*. Neither of them had shown up at Comics 101, Strips '78, or Eaglecon '80. I had met Peter at the SSI dinner in 1979 and corresponded with both artists for quite some time. As it turned out I had to be in London one summer day. John Worsley had a studio in Putney and, at that time, Peter Jackson was living in Ealing, so it was just a question of jumping on the train to call on these two very talented artists.

John had sent me a map showing how to find him so it wasn't too difficult to locate him and I was immediately impressed by all his paintings displayed on the walls. There were portraits of all kinds and this made me recall my visits to Ellen Vincent's office in 1957 when I saw a Worsley painting on the wall. Many years before this time I had remembered hearing a radio broadcast which talked of the death of "artist John Worsley" and I assumed it must have been the former *EAGLE* artist. I even mentioned this to Frank Hampson who said he recalled attending a memorial service for him. So if anyone can shed light on that mystery I'd be happy to hear of it; all I know is I hadn't the courage to ask John himself about this strange event. We chatted about his *EAGLE* strip 'PC49' and he still had a number of originals . Being an ex-Navy man he was very free with his whisky and I must have had at least four glasses. I mentioned that my late father had been a 22 year sailor in the Royal Navy which led John to remark "The trouble is when you tell people you were in the war they always seem to ask 'Did you kill anyone?' I have to reply, 'Yes I did!"

I had got the impression that both Worsley and Jackson now considered their strip cartoon work long in the past and while remembering it with a certain amount of pride saw it all as just a means to an end. Like Ron Embleton they had "moved on". Peter's home was just a short walk from the railway station and I found it hard to realise that he lived in this large house alone. It was full of books of all kinds and I was reminded that Peter was one of the most recognized experts on London, having illustrated and written on the subject for many years. He showed me some of

his very detailed historical paintings of London as seen from above. They covered different historical periods and were all meticulously executed. We even climbed up into his loft to see the numerous boxes of glass negatives covering decades of London's past. While having a cuppa Peter did express regret that he had no originals from his work on *EAGLE* and *Express Weekly*. "Ron Embleton and I often argue about our respective work on times gone by" said Peter. "I tell him he still makes his street urchins too clean!" He always replies "I know but I can't help it – that's the way I work!" I should also mention that Peter was a talented sculptor and there were many examples of his work dotted about his home. Peter Jackson was one of those gifted artists who made an immediate impression on me when I first saw his 'Mark Fury' strip in *Express Weekly*. Like Hampson, Embleton and Bellamy you just knew at first glance that this artist had a real feel for his subjects.

Liz and Don Lawrence with Alan

Ron Embleton had often talked about his friend and fellow artist Don Lawrence. Their careers had followed very similar paths, both having started out drawing (and in some cases writing) black and white strips for the early, cheap comics of the late forties and early fifties. Ron had his 'Wulf the Briton', Don had 'Karl the Viking'. When Ron was illustrating 'Wicked Wanda' for *Penthouse*, Don was busy with 'Carrie' for *Mayfair*. Don Lawrence was best known for his 'Trigan Empire' strip in *Ranger* and *Look and Learn* and had, rightly so, been labelled one of the colour artists of that period.

I have to be honest and say I was never a 'Trigan Empire' fan, it was one of those strips that escaped me. Likewise a lot of his other strip work, not being a buyer of that many comics as a young boy and/or young man! I had seen Don's 'Fireball XL5' work for *TV21*, a strip he hated doing, and many of his illustrations for various annuals. I always found his faces rather distinctive, sometimes quite gruesome. But his work on the Eppo strip 'Storm' gave him a chance to really shine and his colouring was, again, outstanding. So when Don invited me down for a day to his Eastbourne home I was keen to accept.

Don's lovely wife Liz met me at the railway station and we drove to their home, where I found Don busy at his drawing board on an episode of 'Storm'. The room wasn't so much a studio but a downstairs front room that happened to be used as Don's workplace. He, in fact, carried on working most of the time I was there-the only one of the artists I had met that did so. Many artists just don't like being watched while they work, as Keith Watson once joked "Any onlooker would probably realise, seeing me work, that I couldn't draw after all!" Don had no such worries and explained to me and his wife just what was going on in each of the frames.

When Keith Watson was drawing 'Roel Dijkstra' for Eppo he spent a few days with Don Lawrence to compare notes and the two artists got on just fine. One disappointment was that Don wouldn't show me any of his 'Carrie' originals, which were locked in a safe!

We did have one break for lunch when Liz came in to ask Don if he wanted "bangers". Don looked at me and asked "Bangers O.K. with you?"

I said "Yes I love them" so Liz went off to prepare the food. Don Lawrence was a very blunt person, who didn't beat about the bush and had a firm view on most things, especially authority – he hated taking orders! During most of our conversation Don's large dog, Trigo, lay fast asleep in a nearby chair.

One great artist whom I never got the chance to meet was Frank Bellamy and I would have loved to have done so. He came across as such a fantastic person, full of ideas and observations on the art of strip cartoons. I did, at least, get a chance to stand in his studio in Kettering, when I called in on his widow Nancy. The studio was empty now but you could imagine FB working there, living each frame he drew. I told Nancy how sorry I was not to have known her husband and she replied "You would have got on well with him, I know it." Still one miss out of so many hits wasn't bad.

John Dyke

by Jon Johnson

Little is known about John Dyke, but such as we have I will impart.

We know that John lived in Wales and was a friend of Marcus Morris long before *EAGLE* was published. When Marcus was planning his new publication he wanted a small colour section dealing with the natural world. He knew that John was very interested in the subject and was quite a good artist too and so he made contact and managed to secure his services as scriptwriter and artist to the new half-page strip.

The number one *EAGLE* contained the first strip on page 10 and the subject was 'The Hedgehog'. John's idea was to feature himself in the strip and he would walk around the countryside talking to two teenagers, Ann and John, about things to see. He portrayed himself as a trilby-wearing country type, but whether this was how he looked in real life, we don't know.

The series, called 'Discovering the Countryside' lasted just over six months, dealing with birds, animals and vegetation. The last episode was in *EAGLE* dated 21st October, 1950. John was back in *EAGLE* in issue 48, dated 9th March, 1951, with a series called 'Advice on your Pets'. This time the series was in black and white and lasted for eighteen issues. Rowntree's now sponsored a half-page, coloured strip called 'Nature Detective' on *EAGLE*'s page 10 and one can speculate that as Hulton's were now being paid to have a half-page, did they want a strip they had to pay for themselves?

John moved on to other artistic works and one of his most famous designs was that of postage stamps for Lundy Island.

Originally, Lundy stamps were issued in Puffin values, a Puffin equalling 1d. The initial rates for 'puffinage' were: first 2oz. half a puffin; subsequent 2oz, 1 puffin. There have been several issues of Lundy stamps, and some over-printing of existing stamps. First appearing in 1929 they carried on into the sixties.

John Dyke became involved in 1951 when seven new values were issued. Several issues commemorated special events like the Coronation. Jubilee stamps marked 25 years of Lundy stamps and there were three Winston Churchill stamps showing Lundy in the background. As far as is known, John's last designs were for the fortieth anniversary of Lundy Stamps in 1969, when he designed five new stamps.

He was involved with the Lundy Collectors Club and their publication *The New Puffin Journal*.

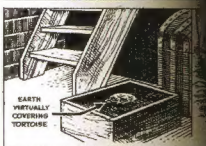
My thanks to John Swan for help with this article.

ADVICE ON YOUR PETS

How To Look After Your Tortoise

by Professor Ca...

LAND TORTOISES ARE NOT EXPENSIVE, BUT TRY TO KEEP ONE UNLESS YOU HAVE A GA... BEWARE OF GIVING IT 'FREE RANGE' FOR IT A LOT AND LOVES A MERACIOUS ROBIN'S TORTOISES ARE VEGETARIANS AND DO NOT...



TORTOISES NORMALLY HIBERNATE (SLEEP THROU... WARM GREENHOUSE AND CAN FIND SUITABLE FOO... HIBERNATION, BUT ONCE A TORTOISE HAS STARTE... UNTIL THE SPRING. IF IT IS DISTURBED, IT MAY L... WHERE IT WILL BE OUT OF REACH OF FROST. PUT... OR HELP IT TO BURROW IN THE GARDEN BY DIG...

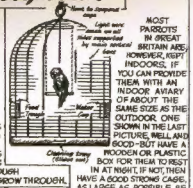
ADVICE ON YOUR PETS

Keep Your Parrot Warm - and Occupied!

by Professor Cameron

PARROTS AND PARRAKEETS (A NAME USED TO DESCRIBE THE SMALLER KINDS OF PARROT) ARE FOUND IN ALL PARTS OF THE TROPICAL WORLD. IN NATURE NEARLY ALL OF THEM LIVE IN FORESTS AND MAKE THEIR NESTS IN HOLES OF TREES. MANY KINDS HAVE BEEN KEPT IN CAPTIVITY. THE FAVOURITES BEING THE VARIOUS AMAZON PARROTS.

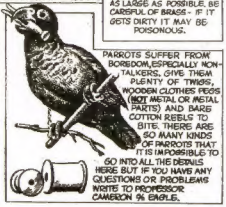
PARROTS CAN BE KEPT OUT-OF-DOORS IF YOU HAVE A PROPER OUTDOOR-INDOOR AVIARY WITH A HEATED INDOOR PART. IN SUMMER YOU CAN ALSO PUT YOUR PARROT INTO A MOVABLE AVIARY PROVIDED THERE IS A GOOD WARM BOX FOR SHELTER. ALL SIX SIDES SHOULD BE OF ½" WIRE MESH, WITH THE BOTTOM NEAR ENOUGH TO THE GROUND TO ALLOW THE LONG GRASS TO GROW THROUGH.



MOST PARROTS IN GREAT BRITAIN ARE, HOWEVER, KEPT INDOORS. IF YOU CAN PROVIDE THEM WITH AN INDOOR AVIARY OF ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS THE OUTDOOR ONE SHOWN IN THE LAST PICTURE, WELL AND GOOD - BUT HAVE A WOODEN OR PLASTIC BOX FOR THEM TO REST IN AT NIGHT. IF NOT, THEN HAVE A GOOD STRONG CAGE, AS LARGE AS POSSIBLE. BE CAREFUL OF BRASS - IF IT GETS DIRTY IT MAY BE POISONOUS.

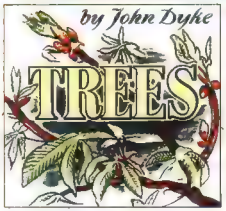
DON'T LET YOUR PARROTS GET COLD. MANY 'FOWL DISEASES' ARE DUE TO CHILLING, SO FOR PREFERANCE HAVE THE CAGE IN A WARM ROOM - AND CERTAINLY PUT IT THERE IF YOUR BIRD SEEMS OUT OF SORTS. COVER THE CAGE WITH A DARK CLOTH AT NIGHT, ALWAYS HAVE CLEAN FRESH WATER AVAILABLE.

ALL PARROTS SHOULD HAVE (WHEN AVAILABLE) CANARY SEED, SUNFLOWER SEED, HEMP, OATS, AND THEY ALL LOVE APPLES. MANY LIKE WHEAT, GREEN FOOD, GROUND NUTS (MONKEY NUTS), AND BREAD-AND-MILK. FRESH GRASS IS GOOD AND SO ARE BANANAS IF YOU CAN SPARE THEM. DO **NOT** OVERFEED.

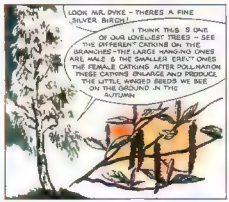


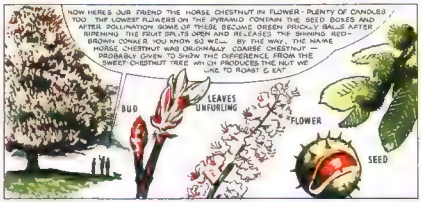
PARROTS SUFFER FROM BOREDOM, ESPECIALLY NON-TALKERS. GIVE THEM PLENTY OF TWIGS, WOODEN CLOTHES PEGS (**NOT** METAL OR METAL PARTS) AND BARS COTTON REELS TO BITE. THERE ARE SO MANY KINDS OF PARROTS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO GO INTO ALL THE DETAILS HERE BUT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS WRITE TO PROFESSOR CAMERON % EAGLE.

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRYSIDE



ISN'T THIS LANE LOVELY NOW THE HAWTHORN IS IN FLOWER
YES INDEED, WHAT A SHOWER OF BLOSSOM THERE IS THIS YEAR—MORE FOOD FOR THE BIRDS IN THE WINTER


LOOK MR. DYKE – THERES A FINE SILVER BIRCH
I THINK THIS IS ONE OF OUR LOVELIEST TREES – SEE THE DIFFERENT CATKINS ON THE BRANCHES – THE LARGE HANGING ONES ARE MALE & THE SMALLER ERECT ONES THE FEMALE CATKINS. AFTER POLLINATION THESE CATKINS ENLARGE AND PRODUCE THE LITTLE WINGED SEEDS WE SEE ON THE GROUND IN THE AUTUMN


NOW HERES OUR FRIEND THE HORSE CHESTNUT IN FLOWER - PLENTY OF CANDLES TOO ! THE LOWEST FLOWERS ON THE PYRAMID CONTAIN THE SEED BOXES AND AFTER POLLINATION SOME OF THESE BECOME GREEN PRICKLY BALLS AFTER RIPENING THE FRUIT SPLITS OPEN AND RELEASES THE SHINING RED-BROWN CONKER YOU KNOW SO WELL BY THE WAY, THE NAME HORSE CHESTNUT WAS ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE FROM THE SWEET CHESTNUT TREE WHICH PRODUCES THE NUT WE USE TO ROAST & EAT
BUD
LEAVES UNFURLING
FLOWER
SEED

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRYSIDE

WHAT A LOT OF NUTS WE'VE COLLECTED MY GOODNESS! WHAT WAS THAT?
I'M AFRAID WE'VE ANNOYED A RED SQUIRREL ANN. BY REMOVING SOME NUTS HE HAD HARDED DOWN FUR HIMSELF – THERE HE IS ON THAT HIGH BRANCH SCOLDING AWAY

HE ISN'T REALLY A RED SQUIRREL AT THE MOMENT THOUGH HAVING JUST FINISHED HIS AUTUMN MOULT. IN WINTER COAT IS SOFT AND THICK AND DEEPISH BROWN WITH LONG TUFTED EARS. IN THE SPRING HE MOULTS AGAIN IN MAY AND THEN HIS FUR CHANGES TO RED

THE SQUIRRELS HOME IS CALLED A DREY, AND IS BUILT IN A HIGH FORK OF SOME TREE. THE DREY IS SHAPED LIKE A BIRDS NEST, OF TWIGS AND STRIPS OF BARK, WITH DRY LEAVES INSIDE. TWO TO FOUR NAKED AND BLIND YOUNG ONES ARE BORN IN MARCH OR APRIL. THERE IS GENERALLY A SECOND LITTER LATER IN THE YEAR

THE SQUIRRELS FAVOURITE FOOD IS OF COURSE NUTS AND PINE CONES. WHEN EATING NUTS HE FIRST NIBBLES A HOLE IN THE TIP OF THE SHELL. THIS IS SPLIT WITH HIS SHARP TEETH TILL HE REACHES THE NUT INSIDE

AS HE DOES NOT PROPERLY HIBERNATE DURING THE WINTER, HE WILL COME OUT ON FAVOURABLE DAYS TO VISIT HIS FOOD STORE. GENERALLY ONE STORE OF NUTS IS KEPT IN THE DREY AND OTHERS HIDDEN ELSEWHERE. IN RUNNING OR JUMPING THE SQUIRREL HOLDS HIS TAIL STRAIGHT OUT TO HANDLE HIM TO KEEP HIS BALANCE

IF ALARMED WHILE FEEDING ON THE GROUND THE SQUIRREL WILL RUSH FOR THE NEAREST TREE, CLIMB A FEW FEET AND CLING THERE PERFECTLY STILL UNTIL THE DANGER PASSES. A FIRST BABY SQUIRRELS HAVE TO BE TAUGHT THE ART OF JUMPING BY THEIR MOTHER.

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRYSIDE

THE HARVEST MOUSE IS ONE OF OUR SMALLEST MAMMALS - LESS THAN TWO INCHES LONG, WITH A TAIL ALMOST AS LONG AS ITS BODY. THIS MOUSE IS FAIRLY COMMON IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND, BUT RARE IN THE NORTH

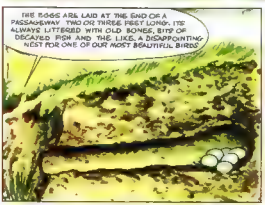
THE NEST IS BEAUTIFULLY MADE ... JUST ABOUT THE SIZE OF A LARGE ORANGE. BLADES OF GRASS OR GRAIN ARE NEATLY PLAITED ROUND THE SUPPORTING STEMS. THERE IS OFTEN NO PROPER OPENING TO THE NEST, AND APPARENTLY THE MICE SQUEEZE IN AND OUT BETWEEN THE BLADES

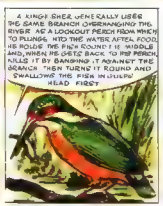
THESE LITTLE MICE WEIGH LESS THAN HALF AN OUNCE. TWO OF THEM CAN BOUNCE ON A PLANT STEM AND HARDLY CAUSE IT TO BEND. THE LONG TAILS SERVE TO KEEP THEIR BALANCE, OR CAN BE WOUND ROUND THE STALKS FOR GREATER SAFETY

THE HARVEST MOUSE FEEDS ON INSECTS AS WELL AS GRAIN AND SPENDS THE WINTER SNUGLY IN HAYRICKS, OR BURROWED IN THE EARTH. THERE ARE SEVERAL LITTERS A YEAR OF FROM 5 TO 9 YOUNG ONES

DISCOVERING THE COUNTRYSIDE

YES, I WAS! JOHN. THERE'S HIS HOME - THAT HOLE IN THE BANK. STAY QUIET! HERE COMES HIS MATE CARRYING A FISH - THERE MUST BE SOME YOUNG IN THE NEST. PROBABLY SIX OR SEVEN OF THEM


THE EGGS ARE LAID AT THE END OF A PASSAGEWAY TWO OR THREE FEET LONG. ITS ALWAYS LITTERED WITH OLD BONES, BITS OF DECAYED FISH AND THE LIKE, A DISAPPOINTING NEST FOR ONE OF OUR MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRDS!


A KINGFISHER GENERALLY USES THE SAME BRANCH OVERHANGING THE RIVER AS A LOOKOUT PERCH FROM WHICH TO PLUNGE INTO THE WATER AFTER FOOD. HIS PLUNGE DOES NOT COUNT AS A HUNT, AND, WHEN HE GETS BACK TO HIS PERCH, KILLS IT BY BANGING IT AGAINST THE BRANCH. THEN TURNS IT ROUND AND SWALLOWS THE FISH HEAD FIRST

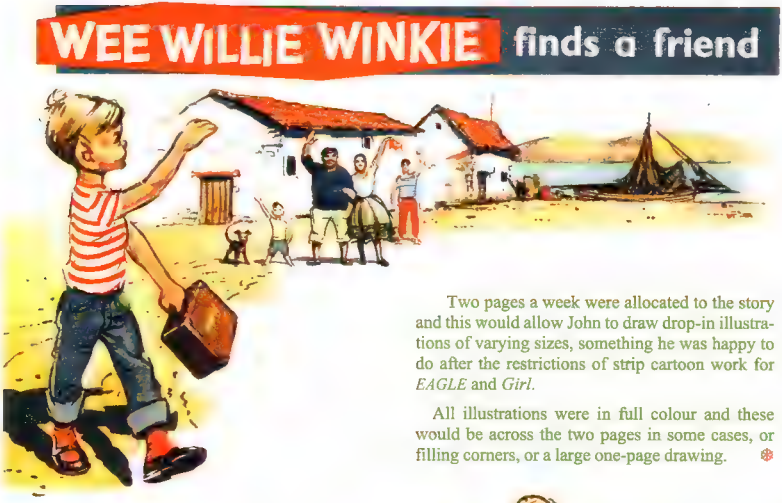
THE YOUNG KINGFISHERS DO THE SAME. IT IS A PRETTY SIGHT TO SEE A GROUP OF BABY BIRDS SITTING ON A BRANCH IN THE SUNSHINE WAITING FOR THE PARENTS TO COME BACK WITH FOOD

TREASURE
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE ONE SHILLING
No. 51, 26th DECEMBER, 1953
OVERSEAS SELLING PRICE
United Kingdom 1/
Eire 1/-
Australia 1/6
New Zealand 1/6
South Africa 15 cents
Rhodesia 1/6
Canada and U.S.A. 25 cents
East Africa 1 60 cents
West Indies 1/6
Early steps to looking and learning
X for Xmas Mr. Answers explains, on page 2, why Christmas is sometimes spelt this way

Treasure,

John Worsley and 'Wee Willie Winkie'

by Howard Corn



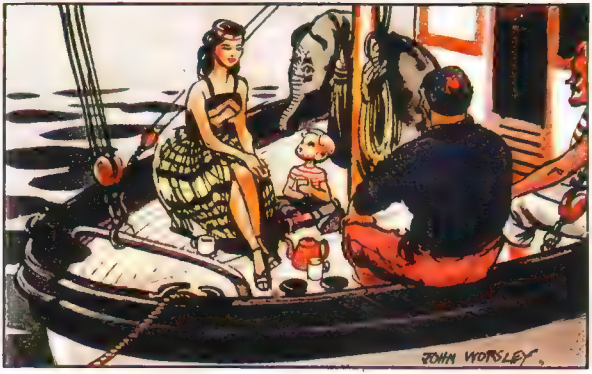
In January, 1963, Fleetway Publications launched a new periodical aimed at pre-school children, called *Treasure*. Just as Hulton's had *Robin* in their stable, Fleetway decided to have a junior *Look and Learn* in theirs. The same tabloid size as the older publication, *Treasure* had colour on alternate page openings, and sold for one shilling, coming out on a Monday. Its aim was education in a very simple and fun way for young children.

Several ex-*EAGLE* artists were used in the paper and one of these was John Worsley, who had a weekly spot illustrating the travels of a young boy called 'Wee Willie Winkie'. Every week Willie and his baby elephant Hannibal would visit various countries and look at the customs, problems and culture of each one. Willie and the elephant had tickets to travel anywhere in the world by any mode of transport.

Two pages a week were allocated to the story and this would allow John to draw drop-in illustrations of varying sizes, something he was happy to do after the restrictions of strip cartoon work for *EAGLE* and *Girl*.

All illustrations were in full colour and these would be across the two pages in some cases, or filling corners, or a large one-page drawing. ❄

Willie and Hannibal



In New Zealand, Pania, a young Maori girl, tells Willie some of the history of the country

Right and below: Willie in Spain

The captain of a ship shows Willie where the interesting countries are to be found

In Venice, a PC49 checks Willie's ticket

Christmas in Bangkok

DIMWORTHY and Co.

EAGLE's school strip stories - Part 2

by Steve Winders

A slightly kinder teacher was the round-faced House Master Mr Flynn, whose wide mouth and small nose made him resemble a frog. On occasion Mr Flynn could be as determined as Mr Kenton to punish Dimworthy's misdemeanours, but sometimes he encouraged his enthusiastic schemes when they coincided with his own. An example of this can be found in the story 'The Diviner' in *Eagle Annual 1967* when Dimworthy causes chaos with a divining rod while searching for Roman remains around the school in support of Mr Flynn's belief that there was once a Roman settlement on the site.

Completing the teaching trio was the Headmaster Dr Pritt, whom Dimworthy regularly addressed as Dr Twit, before immediately correcting himself. The Head was tall, thin and bald, with a pointed nose, which led to his nickname "The Beak". Dr Pritt had a calmer disposition than Mr Kenton and Mr Flynn, but Dimworthy was generally careful to keep on the right side of him as he was apparently the ultimate authority in the school. Fortunately for Dimworthy when his antics had upset even the Head, his luck provided a higher authority. This was usually the Chairman or another senior member of the School Governors, who would appear at the very moment of disaster to save the day.

Two other regular characters featured in the strip. These were the sneaks Smythe and Sweeting. This hapless pair were jealous members of Dimworthy's class and constantly conspired to bring about his downfall, often allying themselves with Mr Kenton. Of course their schemes always backfired on them. If they put a bucket of water above Dimworthy's door it would be Mr Kenton and themselves who would somehow be soaked by it.

Dimworthy's adventures strongly featured mysterious and apparently supernatural elements, as did most *EAGLE* strips of the time. In his first adventure he encountered a phantom knight in armour who appeared to rise from a lake and walk on the water. The armour proved to be a frogman's costume in a story about a search for submerged treasure. Several stories featured apparent ghosts who turned out to be no such thing. In another story, 'The Miracle Machine', Dimworthy's home-made transistor radio developed remarkable properties after it was struck by lightning. He was able to use it to listen to what people were thinking and as it read their minds it caused them to levitate. The 'Dimworthy' stories tended to run for between eleven and sixteen episodes, and unusually for the sixties *EAGLE*, each story had a title.

Mickey Merlin replaced Dimworthy in October 1967, when *EAGLE* also changed its printer and page size. Now it was subtitled "The Modern Paper for the Modern Boy" and the new strip was in many ways an updating of Dimworthy. The traditional blazers and caps of Moorlake School were replaced by the tracksuits of Hardford. Although there were still many schools like Dimworthy's in the 1960s and indeed today, the strip was nevertheless most traditional in its setting and, apart from some technological elements like flying saucers and miniature submarines, could have been set in any decade from the end of the First World War. This is no criticism, but an explanation of why Dimworthy ended and Merlin began. The "Outward Bound" nature of the new school gave the new strip a more modern appearance in line with *EAGLE*'s attempt to be the "modern" paper.

The new strip brought a new artist in Frank McDiarmid, but his style was not dissimilar to Sam Fair's. Both had backgrounds in drawing overtly humorous cartoon strips in D.C. Thomson's comics *Beano* and *Dandy*. Fair's work on these comics began in their earliest days, before the Second World War, drawing 'Meddlesome Mattie' in the *Dandy* from 1938 to 1942, and the wartime strips 'Musso the Wop' and 'Addie and Hermie the Nasty Nazis', which poked fun at the Italian and German leaders. McDiarmid's first work for Thomson's came in the late fifties, when he drew the puzzle page in the *Beano* from 1957. He later took over several of Ken Reid's strips when Reid left Thomson's to join Leo Baxendale on Odhams' *Wham!* in 1964.

Mickey Merlin was quite similar in character and appearance to Dimworthy. He had more of a mop of hair than his predecessor and a freckled face. His new confidence in sport was only compromised by a lack of concentration. If he lost concentration then his performance immediately suffered and he was easily distracted. The other regular characters in the 'Mickey Merlin' strip echoed those in 'Cornelius Dimworthy'. Replacing Mr Kenton was the burly Instructor Firely. Although bearing no physical resemblance to Mr Kenton, Firely nevertheless filled the role of Mickey's chief tormentor, often aided by the two bullies Crawker and Scugg, who replaced

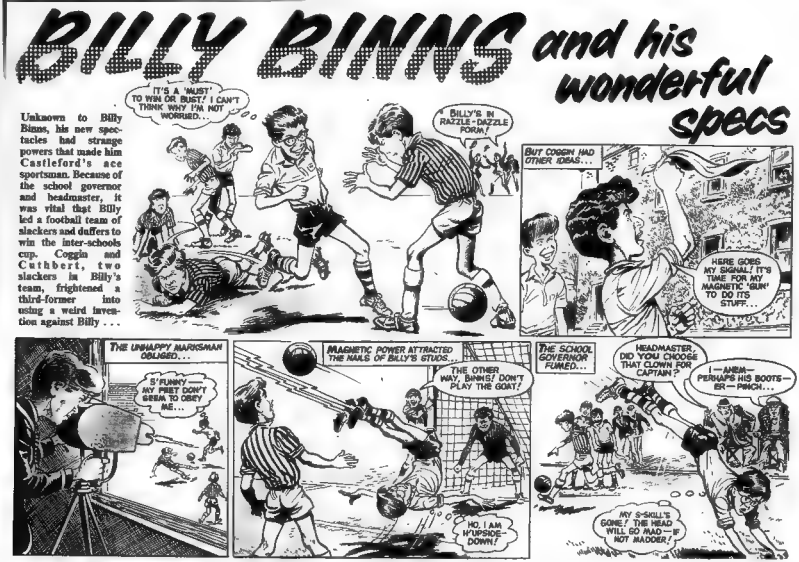
Dimworthy's Smythe and Sweeting. These three were as unsuccessful as their predecessors had been and their schemes also backfired badly. The only other regular character was the Headteacher Colonel Catchpole. Thick-set with moustache and monocle, the Colonel was less astute than his equivalent Dr Pritt in 'Dimworthy', but he was calmer than the quick-tempered Firely. Initially the Colonel often supported Merlin, whose new physical prowess enabled him to achieve sporting success for the school and win rewards for catching villains. However, too often Mickey's feats came at a cost and after suffering several ignominies at his hands including being hit by cricket and rugby balls and crashing his car, the Colonel became just as determined as Mr Firely to have Merlin expelled. Now, like Dimworthy before him, Mickey's salvation depended on the Governors.

'Mickey Merlin' combined elements of both 'Cornelius Dimworthy' and 'Billy Binns and His Wonderful Specs' in his adventures, although the tone and humour were much more in the spirit of Dimworthy. In the course of his six adventures he encountered gold robbers masquerading as ghosts in a ruined priory, an Egyptian mummy which was really a robot and a gorilla used by smugglers to scare people away from their castle hideout. These stories could easily have formed the plots of 'Dimworthy' adventures. However other stories featured Mickey creating a successful rugby team from a group of misfits and playing for the local village cricket team when he is prevented from joining the school team. These plots are more like those in 'Billy Binns' stories.

Only the forthcoming merger with *Lion* caused the conclusion of 'Mickey Merlin'. Although it was also essentially an adventure comic which had originally sought to emulate *EAGLE*, *Lion*'s style was quite distinct from *EAGLE*. Only 'Dan Dare' of the established *EAGLE* strips survived the merger and this was only because of its iconic status. Although *Lion* rejected *EAGLE*'s school stories, 'Cornelius Dimworthy' was reprinted as 'Dizzy Dimwitty' in the more humour-orientated *Buster* comic, beginning in May 1969.

Although Cornelius now became Richard Dimwitty, all the other characters and settings retained their original names. 'Dizzy Dimwitty' ran in *Buster* until January 1970, occasionally reprinting two or three episodes in an issue. Also in 1969, Frank McDiarmid began a new strip in *Whizzer and Chips* comic called 'The Spectacular Adventures of Willie Bunk', about a boy whose new glasses enabled him to imagine himself in fantasy situations such as being a knight in

BILLY BINNS and his wonderful specs
EVERY form has a complete duffer at sports, and the shell at Castleford School is no exception. William Henry Binns – Billy Binns to long-suffering friends – is studiously brilliant, hard-working and a swot. But where sport is concerned, he's the world's worst . . .
AT SINBLE SCULLS HE WAS THE DESPAIR OF THE COACH...
BINNS! FOR PITY'S SAKE, FEATHER THE SCULLS!
OH, DEAR
AT CRICKET HE WAS NO BETTER...
HEY! I WAS STILL FEELING FOR CENTRE...
CONSIDER YOU'VE FOUND IT, CHUM.
WOW! EVERYTHING'S GOING ROUND!
IN A PROPER SPIN, AREN'T YOU, BINNS!
PHYSICAL TRAINING DELIGHTED EVERYONE – EXCEPT BILLY AND HIS INSTRUCTOR...
IN CROSS-COUNTRY RUNS, A LONE FIGURE FOLLOWED EVERYONE ELSE...
DON'T TELL ME – IT'S BINNS! HOW HE CAN BE SO HOPELESS IS AMAZING!


BILLY BINNS and his wonderful specs
Unknown to Billy Binns, his new spectacles had strange powers that made him Castleford's ace sportsman. Because of the school governor and headmaster, it was vital that Billy led a football team of slackers and duffers to win the inter-schools cup. Coggin and Cuthbert, two slackers in Billy's team, frightened a third-former into using a weird invention against Billy . . .
IT'S A 'MUST' TO WIN OR BUST! I CAN'T THINK WHY I'M NOT WORRIED...
BILLY'S IN RAZZLE-DAZZLE FORM!
BUT COGGIN HAD OTHER IDEAS...
HERE GOES MY SIGNAL! IT'S TIME FOR MY MAGNETIC 'GUN' TO DO ITS STUFF...
THE UNHAPPY MARKSMAN OBLIGED...
S'FUNNY MY FIRE DON'T SEEM TO OBEY ME...
MAGNETIC POWER ATTRACTED THE NAILS OF BILLY'S STUDS...
THE OTHER WAY, BINNS! DON'T PLAY THE GOAT!
HO, I AM H'UPSIDE-DOWN!
THE SCHOOL GOVERNOR FUMED...
HEADMASTER, DID YOU CHOOSE THAT CLOWN FOR CAPTAIN?
—AHEM— PERHAPS HIS BOOTS— ER— PANCH...
MY S-SKILL'S GONE! THE HEAD WILL GO MAD— IF NOT MADDER!

armour on his trusty steed fighting an evil baron and his henchmen when in fact he was on his bicycle facing a gang of bullies. In his fantasy personas Willie was able to deal confidently with the problems that the real world presented. The influence of all three *EAGLE* strips is clear here and Mc Diarmid illustrated it in the style he used on 'Mickey Merlin', with Willie Bunk himself bearing a strong resemblance to Mickey.

The premise of 'Willie Bunk' was more complicated than his *EAGLE* predecessors and less successful, but a later serious strip which was partly influenced by Billy Binns and Mickey Merlin proved much more durable. This brought yet another Billy to schoolboy fiction in the person of Billy Dane, star of 'Billy's Boots', about a boy who discovers he can play with the skill of a great former soccer player "Dead Shot Keen", when he wears Dead Shot's old boots. Written by Fred Baker and originally drawn by John Gillatt, the strip ran from January 1970 to 1974 in *Scorcher*, then in *Tiger* when it absorbed *Scorcher*. It ran briefly in the new version of *EAGLE* from 1985 until 1986, before transferring to *Roy of the Rovers* comic, where new stories of Billy continued to feature until 1990.

School-based stories continue to be popular to this day. Sadly there are currently only two examples in comics, but this is because there are so few children's comics and most are based on current television programmes. The two surviving strips are the long running 'Bash Street Kids' in *Beano*, which began in 1953 and 'Winker Watson' in *Dandy*, which began in 1961. In other media however the genre has enjoyed significant success. One of the B.B.C.'s longest-running television shows was *Grange Hill*, a serious programme about a modern comprehensive secondary school, which ran from 1978 to 2008 and inspired the humorous 'Crowe Street Comp.' in the new *EAGLE* that was written by Fred Baker. Today's most popular schoolboy is Harry Potter, who features in the hugely successful novels by J.K. Rowling.

Although these stories of a young magician are not entirely school based, Hogwarts School of Magic features most prominently and, while its curriculum may be quite different from any real British boarding school, there are nevertheless many elements of the traditional school story in the setting. What's more, Harry Potter has special powers! Dimworthy and Co. may have gone, but their spirit lives

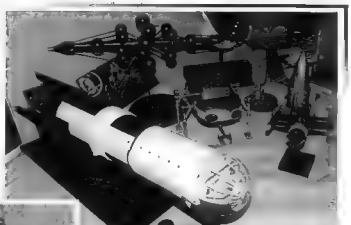
I am grateful to Matt Bowen, who runs the *Buster* comic website, and to David Gould and Steve Holland, for providing information for this article.

Rod Barzilay's *Spaceship Away* Day

by Will Grenham

A crowd of 'Dan Dare' enthusiasts, including a few familiar faces from the *Eagle Society*, descended on Chine Bridge Lodge, Bournemouth, on November 14th, for the second *Spaceship Away Day* organised by Rod Barzilay.

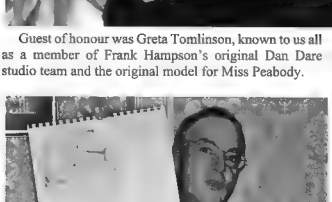
Two rooms were set out. One was for the display of toys and memorabilia (courtesy of Derek Wilson), models (by Sid Clark) and artwork. The other was a seated discussion forum, where Rod introduced guests and speakers, showed videos, reviewed the origins of and discussed future plans for *Spaceship Away*.



Tim Booth, the artist writing and drawing 'Gates of Eden' and drawing (with Don Harley) 'The Green Nemesis' in *Spaceship Away*, told us about his techniques combining black and white drawings with computer colouring.

The origins of Dan Dare fandom were represented by the well-known illustrator Andrew Skilleter, who was one of the founders of the original *Dan Dare Club* and the original publisher of *The Man Who Drew Tomorrow*.

Guest of honour was Greta Tomlinson, known to us all as a member of Frank Hampson's original Dan Dare studio team and the original model for Miss Peabody.



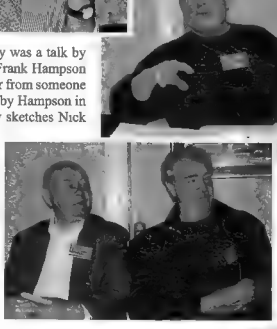
Graham Bleathman, *Thunderbirds* and *Spaceship Away* cutaway artist, showed and discussed some of his work, including a splendid *Anastasia* cutaway.

David Britton gave an interesting talk on the success, and the trials and tribulations of his series of Eagle Exhibitions.

One of the highlights of the day was a talk by Nick Spender (an artist taught by Frank Hampson at Epsom). It was fascinating to hear from someone who had been inspired as a student by Hampson in the latter's later years, and we saw sketches Nick had made of Frank in art class.

Among the videos shown were the pilot for the aborted Zenith Dan Dare film, and the Mobil Dan Dare commercials from the 1980s.

Alastair Crompton revealed that he is extensively rewriting his book *The Man Who Drew Tomorrow*, for publication next year in a "coffee table" format, with a new title. The publisher Paul Stephenson's extensive collection of Hampson artwork will be used to illustrate *Tomorrow Revisited*.



As for the future of *Spaceship Away* Rod spoke of his intention to hand over the editorial reins in the near future. Hopefully this will give him more time to write the continuing saga of 'Dan Dare' which he started with the 'Phoenix Mission' and which has continued in 'The Green Nemesis'.

Never an exclusively Dan Dare publication, Rod showed us several ideas for other strips in *Spaceship Away*. Many of these have their appeal but I, for one, hope that the future of the magazine will not lose its predominant "Old style Dan Dare" focus.

The Case of

The Purple Paint

A PC49 Christmas Story by Alan Stranks

Adapted for *Eagle Times* by Harry Harpole

It was a Wednesday afternoon. Not only that but it was Christmas Eve afternoon, 1951. Archie and Joan had been Christmas shopping in Primrose Hill since 1 o'clock and by 4 o'clock Archie was fully loaded, tired, footsore and dreaming of a cup of char back at his fiancee's flat.

"Come on Archie. Only one more shop. The light bulb went in the hallway this morning and I haven't a spare so I want to buy some from Terry's hardware shop."

"Thank Goodness" mumbled Archie, trying to balance the boxes and bags of shopping around his person. He hated shopping!

They moved along the crowded pavement avoiding the other shoppers carrying their treasures, Christmas trees and rolls of wrapping paper.

"Oh, sorry" said Archie as he banged against an old lady who was also heavily laden. " It's all right. Merry Christmas" was her reply.

"And to you" said Archie out loud but under his breath muttered "Not much chance of that, I'm on duty tonight – ten to six!"

The couple reached Terry's hardware store, negotiated the door and walked onto the wooden floor which caused an echo with each footstep. There was a smell of paraffin, polish and disinfectant all rolled into one.

Although the shop was decorated for Christmas with tinsel all around would-be gifts such as pot and pans and tea sets, the only other customer in the shop was a scruffy, middle-aged man with pitted facial skin and a large bulbous nose. He stood at the counter, nervously tapping it with his knuckles. There was no one behind the counter.

Suddenly, from out of the back of the shop, the proprietor, Richard Terry, appeared with a small, dusty tin of paint.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, sir. I knew we had a small tin of purple paint somewhere but I just couldn't put my hands on it."

"Come on. Let's have it then. I'm in a hurry" said the customer in a gruff way.

"One and six please sir" was all Terry said.

A half a crown was thrown over the counter and the shop keeper gave out the change.

So much in a hurry, the customer snatched up his change and paint and turned sharply, crashing into Joan.

"Hey, watch it, chum!" called out Archie, unable to do much under the weight of his shopping.

"Ah - nuts!" came the reply as the disagreeable man left the shop, leaving Joan to brush her coat down.

"And a Merry Christmas to you" she called back to the closing door.

Having bought three 60-watt light bulbs, the couple left the shop, but Archie was trying to place the grumpy man who had just left. "I know him from somewhere" he said, racking his brain as he chewed his moustache.

Still puzzling, the couple reached the flat and after unloading the shopping Archie slumped into an armchair.

"Oh my aching feet and I'm on duty in five hours."

"Never mind, darling. Put me a new light bulb in the hallway and then you can read the evening paper and once I've put the shopping away, I'll make a drink and then get some dinner."

"Oh… wonderful" came the pained reply.

* * * * * * *

Archie strained his eyes to look at his watch in the darkness of Moorberry Street.

"Hmm. 11.50. I'll bet there are some small kiddies who will find it hard to sleep tonight. Its all very quiet after I told those revellers to calm down a little." But in the distance he could hear some drunken version of 'Silent Night'.

He plodded down the street of terraced houses thinking of his own Christmas times as a child and some of the presents he had had.

He was brought down to earth sharply when a voice said "Merry Christmas darling!"

Archie almost jumped out of his boots. "What the blazes?" He turned sharply. It was Joan, all wrapped up in a muffler to keep out the cold night air.

"Joan! What on earth are you doing out alone at this time of night? You've done this before and someday you'll get me the sack!"

"Oh, I couldn't sleep and thinking of you out here all alone in the cold."

"That's a copper's lot!" said Fortynine in an angry way.

"Oh, stop moaning and have some coffee" said the young lady, producing a mug and small flask.

Writing was daubed on the wall in purple paint. It was the first thing Fortynine noticed

Half angry, half glad of the coffee and company, Archie took a mouthful and said "If Sergeant Sharpe finds me like this with you, I'm for the high jump, Christmas Eve or not"

He finished the coffee and handed the mug back to Joan. "Right young lady. Home for you." They walked to the end of the road which joined a main road which had street lighting. On the other side of the road was Cotter's Confectionery factory which stretched some way down the opposite street.

"Now then, Joan. Walk down the road and you may catch the last bus home." He kissed Joan on the cheek with "See you about one p.m."

He was about to give her a friendly push when a cry went up from the darkness of the opposing street.

"Constable! Constable! Please come quickly!"

Archie screwed his eyes up as he peered down the dark street. Checking that the road was clear he raced across the main road toward the voice. He ran past the side of the building until he reached the caller.

"There's been a robbery, Constable!" gasped the old night watchman. "Please come in."

Archie did as he was bid and followed the old man through the door, passing all the objects he could see in the dark, knocking into the ones couldn't, as they made their way to the office of the factory.

Inside the office the first thing he saw was the wall above the open safe. Daubed on it, in dripping purple paint, were the words: "THANKS VERY MUCH - MERRY XMAS - HA HA".

His eyes moved down to the empty safe.

"I've dialled 999" said the worried old man.

"Good" said the policeman, stroking his moustache. "Don't touch anything. What's your name?"

"Bill Allen" came the reply.

"Right, Bill, do you know how much was in there?"

"Yes, I do. There was just over £500 in there. It was the money that the social club had collected over the year for the children's Christmas party on Saturday."

"What was it doing in the safe on Christmas Eve?" asked Fortynine.

" We had to collect the cash this morning as the banks wouldn't be open on Saturday and we would need the money to pay the chap doing the film show, the conjurer, Santa Claus and his presents and the food. All the money was donated by the workers."

Almost in tears the old man continued, "I don't know what we will do now for the kids."

Just then, Joan walked in. Archie turned around.

"Joan, why aren't you on the way home? D.I. Wilson will be here shortly."

The ringing of bells on the police car and the screeching of brakes outside told the occupants of the office that Wilson and Co had arrived before Joan could answer.

Archie gasped. "Too late. He's here."

Wilson walked in with another uniformed officer and asked Fortynine for a review of the situation.

As Archie finished telling him Wilson turned to Joan. "And what are you doing here, young lady?"

"Oh.. er.. I've been to Midnight Mass, Inspector"

Wilson shrugged. He didn't believe her but that was something for later. He turned to Bill and asked "How did you find this?"

Trying to compose himself as much as possible, the old man began. "Well, at 11.30, I lock up my kiosk and make a tour of the factory checking in at various parts. The machine shops, ingredient stores, carton store, loading bays and the lorry park. My last visit is the office before I return to my kiosk. But tonight... I arrived here and this is how I found it."

"This looks to me to be an inside job. There's no forced entry, and the place is so tidy. Someone, knowing the routine of the night watchman, walked in with the keys and helped themselves to the safe. But why did they daub this message on the wall? They took a risk."

"Sergeant Wright is on leave at the moment and I must say I could have done without this on Christmas Eve. Get the science boys in, Fortynine, and I will have a look around."

Archie resumed his beat after an hour. Joan was safely away in a police car and the rest of the night proved very quiet.

* * * * * * *

Archie clocked off at 6 a.m., made for the flophouse and went to bed. At 1 p.m. he was ringing Joan's doorbell holding a bag of presents. Joan let him in with a "Happy Christmas Darling" and a kiss started the festivities.

The Christmas roast was of chicken and all the trimmings that one could buy in the days of food rationing. They drank a little wine and listened to the King's Christmas message on the radio as they relaxed in the armchairs. At five o'clock Joan suggested a walk around the park to walk off the "full up" feeling. Reluctantly, although he didn't let it show, Archie agreed.

They donned their coats and, arm in arm, set off across the park. The weather was quite mild and although it was now dark their walk was quite enjoyable.

As they walked past The Tudor Rose public house, Joan said "Why don't we go in for a quick drink as it's Christmas?"

Archie agreed, saying "O.K. I know the landlord here - Stan Bailey."

The couple walked in to the large lounge where, judging by the queue at the bar, business was brisk.

Joan found a seat and her fiancé made his way to the bar. As he stood waiting his turn, he noticed a man buying a couple of drinks a few bodies away. It was the disagreeable fellow with the big purple nose they had encountered in the hardware store yesterday afternoon. To pay for his drinks he produced a wad of notes and Fortynine noticed some splashes of purple paint on his hands.

"Oh" he thought, "he must have been using the paint he bought yesterday."

As the bar cleared Stan said "Hello Archie, Merry Christmas. What can I get you?"

"Sweet sherry and half of bitter please Stan."

As the landlord gave Archie his change a disturbance started at a corner table. It was he of the big nose shouting at the woman he was with.

"...And don't you forget it." bellowed the man, bringing his fist down on the table and shaking the drinks.

The woman, a middle-aged, slim, worried- looking lady, flicked back the long strands of black hair over her face as if trying to hide it. Her hand trembled as it held a cigarette.

Back at the bar Archie said to Stan in a whisper, "Oh dear. Not much Christmas cheer there" as he looked at the couple.

"They came in at opening time and have been drinking ever since. I will probably have to ask them to leave shortly if he keeps shouting."

Archie took the drinks over to Joan and whispered "Have you noticed, the chap that's doing the shouting in the corner is Mr Bignose from the hardware store yesterday, Joan?"

"Yes I have," she replied. She took a sip of her drink and then said "You know, Archie, that paint on the walls of the office robbery last night was purple just like he bought. Perhaps it was him?"

"It would want a bit more proof than that to convict him" came the reply.

Just then, more shouting from Bignose in the corner. "... Don't do it again" was heard all over the lounge.

By now Stan had had enough. He marched round the bar and walked up to the couple's table.

"Come on, sir, time to go. I think you've had enough." He took hold of the man's jacket.

Bignose lashed out. "What do you think you're doing? Get off me."

"Come on sir, or I will have to call the police."

"Call them then" shouted the customer, swinging his fists.

"Here we go again!" said Archie as he got up and walked across the lounge to help Stan.

"Now, come on chum. I'm a police officer and we would like you to leave."

Bignose lashed out again but in doing so upset the table causing his frail partner to crash to the floor with her chair.

Now sobbing, she cried out "What do you think to a man who robs children of their Christmas party money? (sniff)... I hate him – I hate him. He's nothing but trouble."

Archie took hold of the big man and then exclaimed "I know you. You're Peter Pearce better known as Purple Puggsy Pearce on account of your nose. Released from prison 12 months ago after 15 years for robbery with violence."

Joan went to the aid of the woman still lying on the floor sobbing. Through the sobs she continued "Yes, he got a job at Cotter's sweet factory as a handyman/cleaner… (sniff). I worked in the office, we met and he came to live with me four months ago. I've been bullied and knocked about ever since… (sniff). Three weeks ago he got the sack from Cotter's for stealing sweets and chocolates and selling them around the pubs. He then bullied me into 'borrowing' the office keys to rob the safe."

Twisting Pearce's arm behind him, Archie said "You're under arrest Chummie. Joan, will you ring Wilson please?"

* * * * * * *

As Archie signed off his shift at six o'clock on Boxing Day morning, Sergeant Stone said to him,

"Fortynine, Wilson wants to see you and that girlfriend of yours at 2 o'clock in his office."

* * * * * * *

Sergeant Wright and Wilson were in the D.I.' s office when reception phoned to say a Mr James Cotter, of Cotter's Confectionery was with Archie and Joan waiting to be seen.

"Fetch 'em in, Wright, would you?" said Wilson, filling his pipe.

Wright did as instructed and ushered Mr Cotter, Archie and Joan into the office.

"You've met PC49 and his fiancée, Mr Cotter. This is the young man who arrested Pearce."

"Yes, I'm most grateful to him, Inspector. We have got some of the children's party money back, but I'm happy to make up the difference. We have had a very good Christmas this year at Cotter's, even with the rationing. Much better than some of the big boys!"

"That's splendid" said Wilson. "And now you might like to know why Pearce daubed your office walls with purple lettering. It was for revenge. You had sacked him for theft and in his twisted thinking he wanted you to know it was the man everyone in the factory knew as Purple Pearce who had committed the crime. That's why he used purple paint. I somehow think he wanted to go back inside. He couldn't cope very well.

The poor woman he lived with is also guilty but should be able to claim he forced her into the crime. If he had treated her better she may not have shopped him."

"Another crime Archie has solved for you, Inspector" said Joan.

Fortynine cringed, saying "Quiet, Joan - please." But Joan was on a roll. "Don't you think it's time he was made a detective, Inspector?"

"Please, Joan" squirmed Archie.

Hoping to change the subject, Archie produced a circular box of purple Turkish Delight. "Would you like some purple Turkish Delight, Inspector? It's some that Mr Cotter gave me in reception and it's very good."

"Before I go purple with rage, Wright, see these two to the door" groaned Wilson.

"Just going, Inspector. Goodbye, Mr. Cotter. Many thanks for the Turkish Delight."

He saluted as he took hold of Joan's arm.

"Good afternoon all! And a Happy New Year!"

Would you like some purple Turkish Delight, Inspector?" asked Archie

The Late Jack Daniel

Some personal recollections by Nigel McMurray

A few years ago the *Eagle Society* held a major event on Lawrence of Arabia in Dorset. It was generally understood that Jack would have produced the graphics for a proposed adventure story on Lawrence on the back page of *EAGLE* and so his involvement was essential. I contacted Jack and one afternoon Eric Fernie and I went to visit him at his home in Battersea. In due course I would make a further visit with Andrew Coffey. Well, they were days to remember! In each instance, it was to be a real "blokes afternoon" once we all finally found his home in Cabul Road! Jack's house was also his studio and the outside was, as I guess one should have expected from an artist, completely different from any other frontage in a somewhat boring street.

Somewhat confusingly, there was a quotation above his almost shop-front style entrance which read, " 'See the world in a grain of sand' – William Blake, Battersea Boy. " Once one finally got one's mind wrapped round this it came across as pure Jack, in that he was linking himself with Blake (which of the two was the most surreal?) and both had spent some time in Battersea. Anyhow, we weren't the only ones to be confused. Apparently Jack received regular visits from the Jehovah's Witnesses who thought he was, indeed, Mr Blake – something that Jack, in his mischievous way, declined to enlighten them on!

Well, the decks would be cleared on the Eaglers' visits and out came the old health-hazard coffee mugs and a dangerous, Sainsbury's-finest, chocolate cake. Then the art history sessions began. Jack had never stopped painting and there were numerous modern images, in paint and wood, scattered around the rooms upstairs and down and also in the back garden. Some could be interpreted as ladies in erotic poses, though one could not be entirely sure and was too embarrassed to ask. But he always knew his art was a million miles from that in the *EAGLE* all those years ago; "I could have taken some paintings to the Eagle Weekends but the little boys wouldn't have understood a thing."

Jack was guest at four Eagle Weekends and his first, in Bath, threatened to be a wee bit controversial, in that he would meet up with Charles Chilton for the first time in forty years. Charles, as author of 'Riders of the Range', had apparently engineered Jack's dismissal as artist of the series because he was always altering the storyline! "You, bloody you!" shouted Jack as he headed for Charles and we all put our hands on our six-guns in case of trouble. But this was just Jack at his dramatic best and the incident descended into hilarity not least because Charles, wisely, claimed (or feigned) ignorance of the sacking situation.

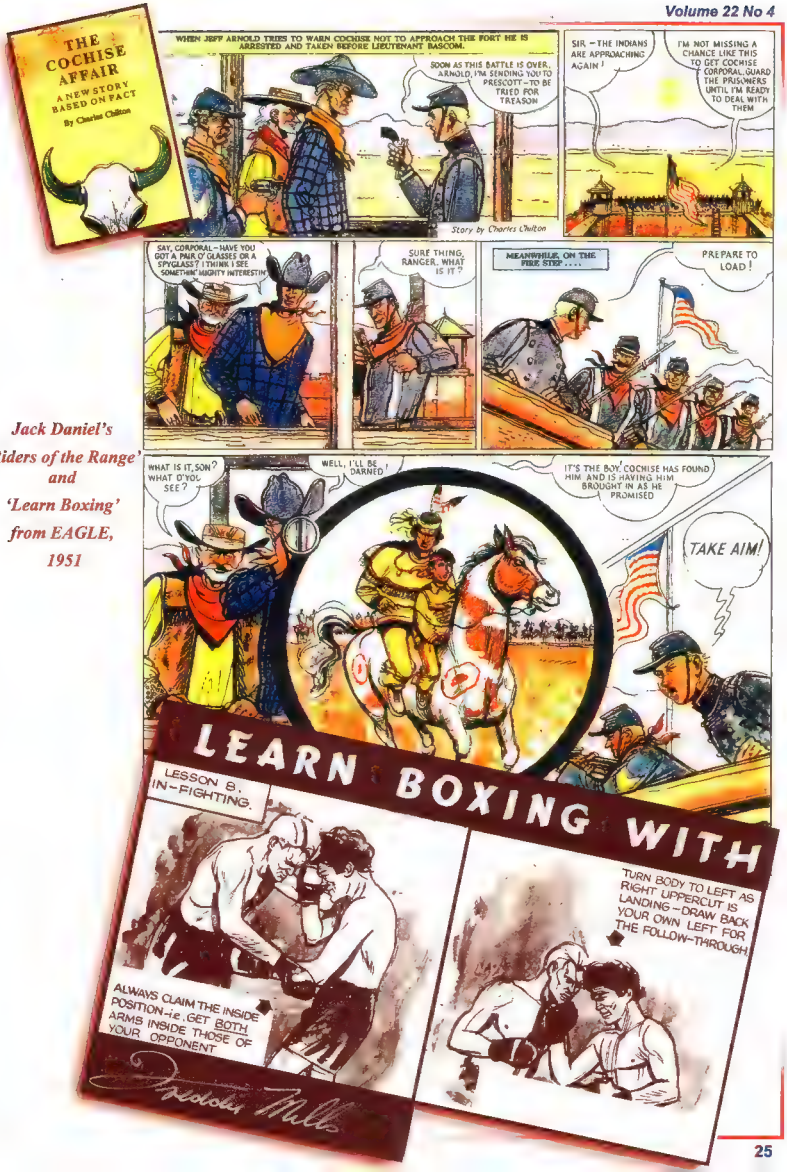
Jack, Eric Fernie and I set up a two hour session at the Lawrence Eagle Weekend to discuss the various images of Lawrence in the eyes of painters, sculptors and photographers. "We'll never fill in two hours Nigel" said a very apprehensive Eric, and I had a few doubts myself. But we needn't have worried. Jack, in his nonchalant way, managed to draw the entire gathering into what was, in effect, an art appreciation class for many who rarely darkened the door of an art gallery. Mind, it was all helped by Jack's obsession with Lawrence and that he had personally known some of the artists who had painted him. "That's not Lawrence, that's McBey!" he said when James McBey's portrait of Lawrence appeared on the screen, "The blighter's painted himself!" So, if McBey is ever totally discredited in the art world, you'll know where you heard it first. Then off we went on a tangent as to what a portrait was and what went through a portrait painter's mind. It helped that Jack, himself, had produced two images of Lawrence years back, one in which Lawrence was veiled – which put the whole enigmatic character of Lawrence in a nutshell in that he always cloaked his real self. Jack's membership of The Arts Club and other worthy organisations just slipped out in the discussions and it dawned on we Eaglers that we knew just a tiny facet of the real Jack Daniel.

Following on from any Cabul Road visit there was the mandatory trot down to his hostelry where he was the life and soul of the party and where he readily bought a lime and lemon for me, his teetotal colleague. There were always a couple of his old soldier pals at the hostelry, both on hard times, and it was apparent that Jack visited them and helped them. Jack (being a sober and sombre member of the community…) was a Rotarian and, to my surprise, had an involvement with Chelsea Methodist Church whose then minister, Rev. "Jed" Davis, I had known in times past. "Jed" readily recalled that Jack, via the Rotary, helped with the Chelsea church's social outreach and was the only one who could keep the "clients" under control, bawling at them if they stepped out of line! Now who would have guessed that? It also turned out that Jack organised big local events for the housebound and elderly in his area at Christmas and even played the part of Father Christmas; no doubt some of the ladies harboured hopes that he would take them off the shelf and dust them down in his charming and cavalier fashion.

Jack's family was his own business but my commenting on the photograph of a beautiful girl in his dining room revealed that it was his daughter who, I think, had died in her twenties. There was sadness, but no bitterness, behind his happy exterior.

But … Jack's art and *EAGLE*. I always loved his art as being so different to the clinical and clean cut images of his fellow artists. Jack's stylised Western images, given that he had no knowledge of the West, are as dramatic as they come. I refer to his aerial landscape views, the heat of the desert sun that seemed to burn through the page, the depiction of gunfire where you almost heard the gun go off, and his stylised lines of charging Indians without any anatomical or costume detail. He was well ahead of his time and the heroes and villains were more in the mould of the future "spaghetti westerns"; there were no rodeo style cowboys and Indians in Jack's art.

This isn't a biography; that has been done before. It isn't an analysis of his career, or even his career in *EAGLE*. It's just a few personal reminiscences, laced with laughter and tears, of one of *EAGLE*'s finest. What are your memories? A Rector friend and a Methodist minister officiated at Jack's funeral and his ashes were scattered, according to his wishes, on the notorious Cerne Giant in Dorset; where else! Even in death he had the last, mischievous, laugh. Veil Jack Daniel.


THE COCHISE AFFAIR
A NEW STORY BASED ON FACT
By Charles Chilton
WHEN JEFF ARNOLD TRIES TO WARN COCHISE NOT TO APPROACH THE FORT HE IS ARRESTED AND TAKEN BEFORE LIEUTENANT BASCOM.
SOON AS THIS BATTLE IS OVER, ARNOLD, I'M SENDING YOU TO PRESCOTT – TO BE TRIED FOR TREASON
Story by Charles Chilton
SIR – THE INDIANS ARE APPROACHING AGAIN!
I'M NOT MISSING A CHANCE LIKE THIS TO GET COCHISE – CORPORAL, GUARD THE PRISONERS UNTIL I'M READY TO DEAL WITH THEM
SAY, CORPORAL – HAVE YOU GOT A PAIR O' GLASSES OR A SPYGLASS? I THINK I SEE SOMETHIN' MIGHTY INTERESTIN'
SURE THING, RANGER. WHAT IS IT?
MEANWHILE, ON THE FIRE STEP....
PREPARE TO LOAD!
WHAT IS IT, SON? WHAT D'YOU SEE?
WELL, I'LL BE DARNED!
IT'S THE BOY COCHISE HAS FOUND HIM AND IS HAVING HIM BROUGHT IN AS HE PROMISED
TAKE AIM!
LEARN BOXING WITH
LESSON 8. IN-FIGHTING.
ALWAYS CLAIM THE INSIDE POSITION – i.e., GET BOTH ARMS INSIDE THOSE OF YOUR OPPONENT
TURN BODY TO LEFT AS RIGHT UPPERCUT IS LANDING – DRAW BACK YOUR OWN LEFT FOR THE FOLLOW-THROUGH
Freddie Mills

Jack Daniel's 'Riders of the Range' and 'Learn Boxing' from EAGLE, 1951

UNDER THE 1950

Some Toys Sant

Douglas Newbiggin sent in this photo of a Palm Toffee container with advert., and Ron French the photograph of two very rare Pelham puppets of John Ryan's 'The Boy' and Lettice Leefe (Harris Tweed was also available).

Ron also sent in this photo of the Lone Star 'Riders of the Range' badge and spurs box.

s Christmas Tree

a might have left you

We have featured the 'Eagle Happy Box' before, but not in colour.

'Nowhere' is not quite what it seems!

by Ray Aspden

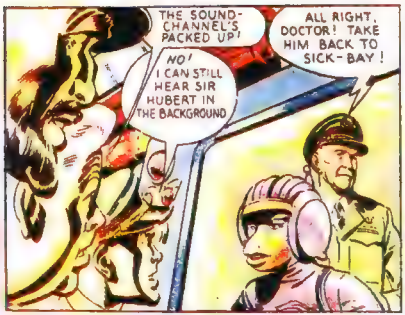
The Pathé Pictorial of Frank Hampson at work in his Epsom studio, used in the *Comics Britannia* TV programme, is now available on line at:

http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=556

The piece is dated 20th February, 1956, but shows Frank working on a 'Man from Nowhere' board used in the *EAGLE* on 15th July, 1955 (Vol. 6 No. 28) - except that all is not quite what it seems. Frank is shown inking and then colouring the right arm of Sir Hubert in the bottom left frame, in an area originally filled by the head of Lero. The strip is lettered, apart from the text box, and, at first glance, looks to be the original with the Crypt head peeled off. But the board is not completely coloured, which suggests that we maybe looking at one of Frank's notorious, discarded "roughs".

The top half of the board shows an Earth ship approaching the Crypt intruder, somewhere beyond the Moon, in a scene which never appeared in the *EAGLE*. Another example of the way a storyline was allowed to develop throughout the production of a strip. It is impossible, at the low resolution of the film clip, to make out if the board is in two halves, joined by tape; but it would need a radical change to the storyline for the scenes to run consecutively.

There is much of interest in the studio background. In particular, behind Frank's anglepoise lamp is the iconic Mekonta board of Vol. 1 No. 15, while next to the telephone is the bottom half of the Operation Saturn page from Vol. 3 No. 48.



THAT'S THE FIRST TIME HE'S SHOWN ANY DESIRE TO COMMUNICATE — BUT HE SPOKE WITHOUT SOUND!
AND TOO FAST FOR ME TO LIP-READ — EVEN IF I KNEW HIS LINGO
WRAP HIM UP IN COTTON WOOL UNTIL I GET BACK TO H.Q.!

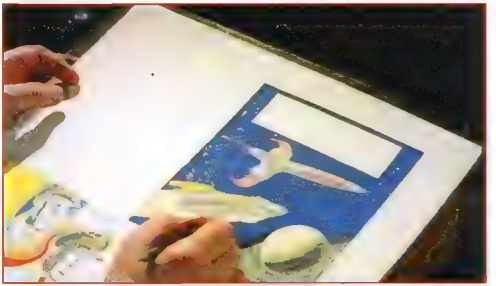
The web site carries the following synopsis of the film, with descriptions of Medium Shots (M/S) and Close Ups (C/U):

M/S of a space ship or rocket suspended in the air; lights below are switched on and two men come into this high angle shot; Dan Dare creator Frank Hampson is in a suit, the other man is his father, wearing an army uniform. M/S of the men discussing the model hanging before them.

M/S of a schoolboy [*Peter Hampson*] in a room with a spaceman; the spaceman wears a bizarre costume with many plastic attachments to it. The boy attaches a badge to the spaceman's upper arm and turns to look at Frank [*actually Don Harley*] painting a mask on a desk beside them. Commentator tells us artist Frank is working on his 'Dan Dare' strip. The boy walks over to have a look at the mask; it looks like a kind of green monkey-type face. The boy puts the mask on and waggles his head about as commentator says "In case you don't recognise this space monster, it's a Treen, from the planet Venus", and goes on to explain the boy is Frank's son, Peter, who is helping him out.

M/S of Frank drawing at his desk; he looks up and we see his model is the man in the army uniform we saw earlier, striking a pose. Commentator informs us this is Frank's father, "better known to Dan Dare fans as Sir Hubert Guest, Controller of the Interplanet Space Fleet". C/Us of the artist and model. C/U of the comic strip Frank is working on, with the outline of his father clearly seen. C/U panning along Frank's mantelpiece where various spaceman figures are seen; tilt up to show a space rocket [*The Valiant*] suspended from the ceiling.

M/S of Frank working at his desk as Peter, the spaceman (with helmet off he is Eric Eden) and Mr Hampson Snr, all gather round to look at the strip he works on. A woman, Joan Porter, enters, puts the Treen head on a table, and looks on. C/U of the page Frank is working on, showing two rockets flying towards the moon. ❁



All film images © British Pathé

IS THERE ANYBODY THERE?

The text of Steve Winders' *Address the Eagle Society,* at the 2009 Annual Dinner

I see that Nigel has allocated half an hour for my five minute speech, so there's plenty of time for spontaneous applause and extended laughter.

What an excellent venue the Guy Chester Centre is and how well we've been looked after. The *Harris Tweed Appreciation Society* came here for a weekend a couple of years ago but I'm afraid I didn't make it. I was in Chester, looking for the Guy Muswell Hill Centre.

We've had apologies from Will Grenham. He can't be here because he's gone to see Bob Dylan. I could understand it if he'd gone to see Matt Dillon! Apologies also from Chris Abbott. He should be here, but he's got a very cheap Satnav. You know I feel sorry for all those ladies who work for the Satnav companies and have to give us the directions. They must be on call 24 hours a day! It doesn't matter what time we switch on our Satnavs – they're always there to tell us which way to go and they never seem to get particularly upset when we take a wrong turning. "Recalculating route." That's all they say. "Recalculating route." My wife never says that when she's directing me!

Next year will be the sixtieth anniversary of *EAGLE*'s arrival and of course this year is the fortieth anniversary of its demise. As time passes there are fewer and fewer people who worked on it who are still living. Although many more people are living longer nowadays – in fact there are 12,000 people in this country who are over a hundred years old and several of them are here tonight – most *EAGLE* staff spent too much time slaving over drawing boards with cigarettes in their mouths and then relaxed in pubs rather than gymnasiums. Consequently it becomes increasingly difficult to find guests for our weekends.

Of course a few years ago the Society's Editorial Team solved this problem by recruiting unemployed actors to pose as former *EAGLE* staff, but I exposed this scandal at our York Conference. Since then relatives and friends of *EAGLE* staff have sometimes been invited as guests, but this has met with mixed results.

The *Harris Tweed Appreciation Society* have addressed the problem in a different way. Inspired by the well known proverb "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em", they recruited a famous French spirit medium to host a séance at their recent Convention in Shepton Mallet, in the hope of contacting the spirits of deceased *EAGLE* writers and artists. This is what happened …

"Is there anybody there?" called Madame Clare Voyant, the famous medium, as she attempted to commune with the dead on behalf of the *Harris Tweed Appreciation Society*, whose senior members sat at the table around her in the darkness of the meeting room at Shepton Mallet Community Centre. "Is there anybody there who has any connection with the *EAGLE* comic?" she called for the fourteenth time, hearing the clear sighs of frustration from several of the assembled Tweedies.

Suddenly there was the briefest flash of blinding light followed by a sound like thunder. Chairs and small tables toppled over at the far side of the room. It was quite obvious to the assembled group that a troubled presence had materialised among them.

"Is somebody there?" she called out nervously.

"Er ..Yes. Hello," came a voice, which seemed to the impressed gathering to emanate from the other end of the room.

"Who are you?" asked Madame Voyant in a hushed tone.

"Er .. my name is Cyril Cattermole," replied the voice.

"And did you have any connection with the *EAGLE* comic?"

"Oh yes, I should say so! My Uncle Harold was Leslie Ashwell Wood's next-door neighbour," answered the voice enthusiastically.

"And can you tell us anything about his work for the *EAGLE*?"

"Oh yes. He illustrated many of that publication's famous cutaway drawings."

"Did you ever meet him?" she asked.

"Indeed. I met him on two occasions. Once when I was mowing my uncle's lawn and once at the bus stop outside his house, when his car had broken down."

"Did he talk to you about his work on the *EAGLE*?"

"Not really. He did say it was extremely hard work, but mainly we talked about the weather and how unreliable the buses were."

"Well, have you a message from him for anyone here?" she enquired hopefully.

"A message? No I don't think so."

"Oh this is ridiculous!" interrupted the *Tweed Society's* new Chairman Sir Fred Goodwin, the former head of the Royal Bank of Scotland. "These spirits are no better than the living people we can get!"

And with that he switched on the light behind him, abruptly ending the séance.

As the Society's members adjusted to the light his Deputy Chairman Mr Bob Quick, the former Head of the Anti Terrorist Squad, was shocked to notice a tall figure standing on the far side of the room, among a pile of fallen chairs.

"Who on Earth are you?" he snapped.

"I'm Cyril Cattermole, of course," replied the figure. "Er ..why were you all sat in here with the lights off? I nearly did myself an injury tripping over these chairs when I came in."

Clearly, communicating with the dead is not the answer. I was educated by Jesuit priests and one of them gave the sixth form a piece of advice that none of us will ever forget. "Don't dabble!" he said, meaning don't dabble in the occult, avoid séances, ouija boards, tarot cards and black magic. The reason we all remember it so well is that what he actually said was "Lie, steal, cheat and fornicate if you must, but whatever you do, don't dabble!" Excellent advice as I'm sure you all agree. He's currently serving ten years in Pentonville for embezzlement, which makes a refreshing change from the usual crime that clerics get sent down for!

Now some people believe in reincarnation. Until recently I thought that it was a type of condensed milk, but Tibetan Buddhists, whom I have great respect for, believe that when their spiritual leader the Dalai Llama dies he is reincarnated in a new body and consequently they spend several years searching for a young boy who fits their profile. As Christians we don't believe in reincarnation of course, although nobody dared to mention this to the Reverend Chad Varah, who was pretty convinced that he'd be back. Even the title of his autobiography is *Before I Die Again*, so perhaps we should follow the example of the Buddhists and try to track him down. But even if we could, surely he wouldn't remember his previous life? Perhaps when the guide at Highgate Cemetery asked if any of us had been there before, we should have replied "Not as far as we know."

It is claimed that under hypnosis some people have recalled previous lives. One man apparently remembered his life as a Roman legionnaire and a woman recalled being a French aristocrat in the sixteenth century. Hypnotists claim that they recall details of past lives that the subjects under hypnosis could not possibly have known. But the man who was the Roman didn't speak in Latin or the aristocrat in French. Nevertheless many people have used hypnosis to discover whether they have subconscious memories of past lives and there have been some remarkable discoveries. Under hypnosis our own Frank Hampson discovered he was Leonardo Da Vinci in a previous existence and the Prime Minister Gordon Brown was Captain Smith of the *Titanic*. By a remarkable coincidence Charlton Heston recalled having been Moses in a past life under hypnosis. However he also recalled being John the Baptist, El Cid and Gordon of Khartoum, so he might just have been remembering his films.

But there would be obvious problems in communicating with former *EAGLE* staff through hypnosis. If hypnotists got together and kept an online register of all the identities that their subjects claimed to be then we might have a chance of finding someone, but they are unlikely to do this and we can't randomly hypnotise people on the off chance that they might be Frank Bellamy, Alan Stranks or Fiddy. On the other hand I suppose we might hit the jackpot. Hoping to find Frank Hum-

phris to give his views on 'War with the Sioux', we could instead get Crazy Horse or General Custer! But it's a massive risk and it's not the answer to our problem.

That hasn't stopped the *Harris Tweed Appreciation Society* from trying it of course. They booked Paul McKenna as their guest for a recent weekend, but true to form they messed up on the booking and got Paul McKenna the Preston North End captain and not the famous hypnotist. Mind you I found it a lot more interesting.

Is there anybody there? Yes of course. There are too many people there but we are here and never the twain shall meet, so I'm afraid it's back to Angus Scott's great-nephew Hamish or Hubert Redmill's second cousin Ulrika. I suppose we could try to get some of the people who worked on *EAGLE* in the sixties. A few of them are still alive. But there's a saying that if you can remember anything about the sixties, you weren't really there and this certainly seems to be true as far as some of the sixties *EAGLE* staff are concerned. In my researches for *Eagle Times* articles I have contacted several significant contributors and for the most part they can't remember a thing about it.

The only people who remember the sixties Eagle are David Gould and myself and we certainly weren't there. We were both still in the fifties. We still are. So, long life to those old stalwarts Charles Chilton, Jack Daniel, Don Harley, Gerry Palmer, Geoffrey Bond, Martin Aitchison, John Ryan, John Batchelor and the rest of the surviving Eaglers. And let us thank Nigel and the editorial team for managing to keep producing the excellent weekends and an interesting magazines despite the loss of so many of those who created it. They are gone but their work continues to delight, sixty years later. Each episode of most serials in *EAGLE* ended with the caption "To Be Continued" and that is how I want to end this reflection. The *Eagle Society* is not "To Be Concluded", it is "To Be Continued".

Eagle Society Balance Sheet 2008 - 2009

Cash in Hand	1234.80	Post	896.89
Subs.	4412.47	Printing	3800.00
Sale of backlist	538.97	Editorial Expenses	120.00
Sale of binders	166.30	Will Grenham Expenses	214.33
Interest (Nationwide)	5.76	Envelopes	71.05
2009 Dinner	2430.00	Dinner Expenses	2419.70
Sale of *ET Annual*	9.50	Mag. Collection	20.00
Sale of R. Perry's *Girl* comics	30.00	To R. Perry	15.00
		Photocopying	18.53
			£7575.50
		Cash in Nationwide	1040.87
		" " *E. Times* a/c	46.76
		" " Paypal a/c	142.67
		" " Hand	22.00
	£8827.80		£8827.80

Muswell Hill *Eagle Weekend*	Guy Chester Centre	1986.50
	Highgate Cemetery	180.00
	Spaniards Inn	178.20
	Expenses	75.00
		£2419.70
	Profit	10.30
		2430.00

Christmas Eagles

by James Howard

Christmas issues of comics are something special and many collectors only collect the Yuletide issues of the various titles available.

So what was available during the 1950s, the heyday of British comics, and how did *EAGLE* fare?

It had become a tradition since comics started that the title wording of a Christmas comic would have snow covering the tops of the letters naming the publication and usually the contents had a festive theme. Many portrayed the religious side of Christmas along with some of their usual characters becoming involved in the celebrations.

The cover of the 1950 Christmas edition of *EAGLE* was a real beauty. Coloured holly leaves surrounded the title frame and each of the frames of the 'Dan Dare' story, and anyone looking at the display of comics in the newsagents that Christmas could not have missed the Yuletide theme of the paper.

Inside, page two had Digby, Miss Peabody and Sir Hubert in a tight spot on Venus but still able to dream of Christmas back on Earth. This was shown by three holly trimmed circles showing their dreams. The 'PC49' page had nothing to show it was Christmas, but this would change over the following years and Archie and the Boys Club would celebrate in fine style in forthcoming comics and annuals.

This issue contained the very first episode of 'Riders of the Range' so we couldn't expect much from this story. Ashwell Wood's centrespread showed how the Royal Mail had a robot underground train to help with the London Christmas post. Half of page 10 had a feature on the Christmas tree and how it came to be part of the festivities.

The 'Harris Tweed' page showed Tweed dressed up as Santa Claus and how "The Boy" helped bring a criminal to justice although Tweed, as usual, gets the credit.

All in all - a good Christmas issue!

The *Dandy* and the *Beano* of that year had their usual characters involved in good slapstick comedy wrapped up in a Christmas story as did *Film Fun*, *Radio Fun*, *Mickey Mouse* and *Rainbow* and *Chicks Own*.

The 1951 Christmas *EAGLE* was, again, a good mixture of festive reading. The 'Dan Dare' strip was not as jolly as the previous year- no holly surrounding each frame. Dan and Dig were on the Martian North Pole and the only reference to Christmas was a bubble from Digby saying the landscape was more like a White Christmas and a good tune would be 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer'.

Nothing Christmassy for PC49 or Jeff Arnold but Harris Tweed gets into a plot that fails, thanks to the Boy. A robber of gift jewelry at a party has Tweed tied up and placed in a huge cracker. When the cracker is pulled Tweed is in the middle trussed up!

Another robbery takes place in the 'Tommy Walls' story. A Santa Claus working in a store steals watches from his employer, hides them in his goody box and goes on greeting little children. Tommy, with the help of a dollop of ice cream, sees through Santa and his accomplice's crime.

Ashwell Wood's contribution concerns the King's Christmas message and how it comes out of the radio at home. The family listening to the broadcast look to have been drawn by John Worsley rather than the draughtsman? There was a page and a half of quiz questions and on the sports page a quiz composed by the members of the Arsenal Football Club.

The issue is rounded off by the first part of a two-part Nativity story, 'The Shepherd King', on the back page drawn by Norman Williams.

Two comics were launched in November this year: Hulton's *Girl* came out on the 2nd and *TV Comic* from publishers *News of the World* came a week later on the 9th. Both had very little time to prepare for Christmas as their Yuletide issue was only number 8 or 7 but they did have holly around the frames of the cover story of 'Muffin the Mule' in *TV Comic*.

Girl also made some effort. There was holly attached to the title letters but the only other Yuletide piece was the Christmas story on the inside back page in colour.

The 1952 *EAGLE* dated 24th December had a banner across the top of the cover wishing all readers a Happy Christmas.

The Eagle in the title frame had a blue circle behind it containing stars and a strip running down the left hand side that looks like Christmas wrapping tape.

Once again Dan Dare and Digby have little to do with the festivities being in the hands of the Treens in Marooned on Mercury. However on page two Dan remarks "And to think that back home now it's Christmas!"

On page three we have PC49 seen in his best festive scene of his career. It's the start of 'The Case of the Spotted Toad' and 49 is shown with holly attached to his helmet and walking through the snow. In the centre of the page is a poem by Alan Stranks called 'PC49's Christmas Party' and the Boys Club Beanfeast takes up two long frames, one either side. A good Christmassy page!

Jeff Arnold and Luck of the Legion have no celebrations but Ashwell Wood went to see Dick Whittington at the London Palladium Theatre (by kind permission of Mr Val Parnell) and drew the workings of the panto from the backstage point of view, as a centrespread.

Page 10 has the story of William Banting, a man who went on a diet and gave the name Bant to anyone trying to diet. Below this we have the story of the Donkey at the Nativity in the 'Strange Animal Adventures' series.

A text story appears on page 12 and this is by the Rev. Guy Daniel called 'Ron's Christmas', a one and a half page story about the robbery of rings and how Ron finds them. Tempted to sell them to help his widowed mother who is cash strapped, he takes them to the police and, hey – presto - he receives a good reward, and the family have a good Christmas after all!

Tweed once again is at a Christmas dinner party and the butler, Juggins, is up to no good as he tries to hold the guests up by using a cylinder full of anaesthetic gas. Unbeknown to Juggins, Tweed previously inflated 50 party balloons with the gas and then accidentally bursts a balloon near the butler rendering him unconscious.

The 'Tommy Walls' page is not very festive. In the 'Ten Green Bottles' story Tommy has hidden in the gang's boat sailing up the Thames. He escapes into the river and in the last frame he says "If this plan works I can enjoy some Walls Ice Cream on Christmas Day."

The back page was the first episode of 'Man of Courage', the story of Vincent de Paul. Vincent vanishes after attending a Christmas Eve church service, to his poor mother's dismay.

The Christmas *Mickey Mouse Weekly* from Odhams contained plenty of Yuletide fun with practically every character having a festive strip.

What I liked about this issue was the full colour cut-out theatre and a play that was given away inside. The story had a Dickensian feel to it and the theatre when it was built had four different scene changes. (Someday I will photocopy the theatre in my issue on to cardboard and make it up!)

On to 1953, and what festive fun did we have in *EAGLE*? 'Operation Saturn' was the 'Dan Dare' story and in this episode Digby and Nikki were riding on the back of a Saturnian monster. Digby has time to relate to Nikki what went on at Space-fleet at Christmas time and we see Sir Hubert dressed as Santa Claus in flashback.

'PC49' had the 'Case of the Magnificent Mouse' concluded in this issue. In the last frame we see a Beanfeast at the Boys Club with Tatty Bogle and Bunny's mouse enjoying the spread.

Jeff Arnold has his best ever Christmas page as 'The Arizona Kid' story starts with a very festive hoedown although the Kid spoils it by having a paddy and storming out after crashing a bottle over Jeff's head.

Over the page Ashwell Wood describes the workings of the greetings telegraph system.

The half page 'These Men Live Dangerously' features coal miners with a good family Christmas scene in the centre.

Tweed, now reduced to half a page, is having a Scrooge-like dinner with the Boy when his mates come in with a huge hamper. The boys tuck in and Tweed acts as waiter hoping to get some goodies when the boys have finished.

The 'Tommy Walls' page is a full page of coloured quizzes.

1954, and what have we got in Yuletide reading? *Swift* came up with a nice festive cover with

holly all around the front page strip of 'Tarna Jungle Boy' and a banner wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. Most of the strips have a Christmas flavour including the 'Ladybird Adventure Club' advertising strip. The two centrespreads in the middle had a nativity scene across the top and below this a festive 'Rolling Stones' story (shown in *E.T.* Vol 20 No 4).

By now Thomson's had *Beezer* and *Topper* in their list of juvenile publications and as with *Dandy* and *Beano*, both had a good Christmas content.

EAGLE came up with two specials in their Christmas issue this year. In the centrespread we had 'Chicko's Christmas Party' by Norman Thelwell and on the inside back page we had Hampson's famous 'The Editors Christmas Nightmare'.

The 'Nightmare' page was a gem and it was plain to see that Frank could have drawn any character in *EAGLE*. The rest of the issue was very sparse in Yuletide cheer although there was a sports quiz on page 6.

Moving on to 1955 and a very nice cover on *EAGLE*. Snow on the title letters with more "Christmas tape" around the frame. Dan Dare is on Cryptos and we have a large picture of Dan carrying Digby piggyback style through the air thanks to Dan's inflatable armbags. The story so far box has a holly surround.

PC49 is busy with 'The Case of the New Member' but does manage to pause to wish us a Merry Christmas in the last frame of the page. Ashwell Wood shows us the Junction at Chalk Farm showing trains going through the snow. A half page on

the inside back page is by George Cansdale called 'Christmas Customs' and this is drawn by Norman Williams.

In 1956 we were in the grip of Davy Crockett mania and *Knockout* comic had the frontier scout involved in a Yuletide story on its coloured front page. Other characters such as 'Our Ernie', 'Sexton Blake', 'Billy Bunter' and 'Sporty' all had the Christmas feeling.

It was the year we had the first coloured Christmas issue from *Express Weekly* and sadly they produced a disappointing issue. No snow on the title and just a banner wishing readers a Happy Christmas. The only thing inside was a photo of the Norwegian Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square in the editor's letter and a double page of text and adverts promoting "Family Fun Films". Films featured were *Moby Dick*, *War and Peace*, *Three Men in a Boat*, *Davy Crockett and the River Pirates* and *Cinerama Holiday*.

The Christmas *EAGLE* of this year was another good Festive issue. On the title frame we had a strip across the title frame that looked like transparent tape. On the tape were the words "The Seasons Greetings". Nice editorial page but little Christmas cheer for the characters (including Harris Tweed). Ashwell Wood showed us how atomic energy was providing power to our Christmas tree lights. The inside back page was very festive with a half page illustration by Tom Adams called 'Christmas in the Garden' and below this 'He wants to be a Postman' showing Postman Pat delivering a Christmas parcel.

The 1957 *EAGLE* was a poor example of a Christmas publication. No snow on the title, nothing festive around the frames, just a long line of crackers top and bottom of the cover wishing readers compliments of the season. A half page colour picture on the inside back page, 'The Birth

of Jesus' by Frank Hampson, was all *EAGLE* could muster. *Mickey Mouse Weekly* on the other hand had a wonderful Yuletide cover. A large stocking full of good things was down the side of the cover and the front story carried holly round the frames. It was a sad issue actually as this was the last *Mickey Mouse Weekly* as we knew it. The following week would see the launch of *Zip*, a comic taking all the British content of *Mickey Mouse* and serving it up as a new comic. (It would last only 12 months).

Express Weekly had a better issue showing snow on the title and a good helping of Christmas fayre. Christmas with the stars looked at the pop singers of the day and the way they would be celebrating. 'Wee Sporty' was helping out Santa Claus on Christmas Eve only to find he was bushed on Christmas Day. A text ghost story filled another page.

1958 saw a better cover on *EAGLE* as the snow was back on the title letters. Radio's 'Dick Barton' - Duncan Carse - wrote a text story about Christmas in the sub-Antarctic and Ashwell Wood told us about a driverless train that delivered the Christmas mail on the underground in London.

Tweed once again found himself in a mess – this time finishing up in a box of holly.

And finally 1959. Back came the blue circle behind the *EAGLE* on the title frame and snow rested on the letters. Clifford Makins was now editor and he sent greetings in a half page editorial. A full page featured the works of Charles Dickens and the art of Phiz, the Victorian artist. Tweed in this issue was a half page colour strip finding Harris falling into a fire in the fireplace.

POSTBAG

Please send letters for publication to:
Keith Howard, 25A Station Road, Harrow HA1 2UA

Letters may be edited for space, or other reasons

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Once again many thanks for another great issue. Not so good is the news of the passing of yet another *EAGLE* legend, John Ryan, an artist I never met but felt I knew. I can't help reflecting on the time I was putting together the *EAGLE* Convention brochure in 1980, all those contributors who are now gone: Frank Hampson, Keith Watson, Frank Humphris, John Worsley, Richard Jennings, Peter Jackson, Ron Embleton, Marcus Morris, Ellen Vincent and now the great John Ryan. The trouble is I still (often) feel just the same as that young schoolboy who first read *EAGLE* in 1950 and hate the passing years that take so much from us.

One BLACK MARK! Despite Howard Corn telephoning me to check my, lost, copy on the photo captions you still manage to get the names wrong on the first picture in the Gerry Embleton piece! The caption should read: L to R John Smith, Don Lawrence, Peter Jackson, Gerry Embleton, Ron Embleton, Richard Hook and (seated) Pat Kelleher. Hope this makes up for the mistake.

It was nice to see the 'Dan Dare' colour breakdown sheets. When I first visited the *EAGLE* offices in 1957 the late Arthur Roberts, art editor, gave me the same set of sheets and I mounted them to display on the wall of my "studio" at home. Sadly, over the years, they became very tattered and I had to throw them away so it was really great to view those same sheets again in *Eagle Times*. I would love to have another set just like that.

Keep up the good work, I'm only happy that I can contribute to it all!

Very best wishes.

ALAN VINCE (Chatham)

E.T. Sorry about the "identity crisis", Alan. It won't happen again (I hope)!

Dear *Eagle Times*,

I'm grateful to David Gould for referring to my compendium of Real Times dates in 'Dan Dare' (*E.T.* Autumn 2009, page 36). This was originally sent to Charles Evan Gunter for *Eagle Days* in 1980 and obviously made a lasting impression. Charles never published, because the piece was hijacked by the Astral Gruppenfuehrer. I never saw the result, but heard that my hand drawn pictures were stripped out and I'd always assumed that my authorship credit had also gone.

The Astral antipathy towards fan art (and fan fiction) continued with *Eagle Times* and gave rise to the concept of *Spaceship Away*. Unfortunately this rapidly developed delusions of grandeur and the emotional energy of raw fan art has been suppressed in the deluded hope that the publication will one day appear on the shelves at W. H. Smith. Even if *Spaceship Away* were now to write off its (not inconsiderable) losses and revert to being a fanzine, potential contributors are, alas, older and less prolific than they were 20-30 years ago.

RAY ASPDEN (Droitwich)

Dear Members,

You will probably think the poor old devil is losing it - and you may well be right. One of the two corrections in my 'Operation Saturn Revisited' was still wrong. It should have read that the fairly common Spanish name is Belasco, not Blasco. I think Saturn's been visited enough. My apologies to each and every one of you.

Yours contritely,

KEITH HOWARD (Harrow)

Dear *Eagle Times*,

More great news from Saturnia. The planet Saturn has another wide ring very far out and quite separate it seems from the rings we are familiar with. Current thinking suggests that Enceladus has an ocean of water just below its surface. Presumably this keeps those fountains going.

Mimas looks a pretty bleak place with a gigantic impact crater, as filmed by the Cassini spacecraft. According to Tharl in Operation Saturn, Mimas is the home of Red Thorks.

Amazing to think that apart from Earth, Saturnia is the only place where water exists. Mars is thought to have only dry ice. That crashing of a spacecraft into our own moon hasn't proved anything one way or the other. Plenty of scope nevertheless for another Saturnian adventure for Dan and his friends.

Yours thoughtfully,

ANDREW COFFEY (Great Yarmouth)

E.T. We had *plenty* of water here the other day, Andrew. But I think you can add the Jovian moon Europa to the "water count".

Dear *Eagle Times*,

At the risk of sounding incestuous, (as I'm on the *E.T.* Team!), I must compliment Will (Grenham) on his splendid production of our journal - all his hard work is paying off. The publication now looks and feels refreshed; colourful and well balanced with a house style that unites the whole. Also, since Vol. 22 No. 2, the appearance of the paper of the b/w pages suggest to me that our printer has now joined the digital age. We should now be able to enjoy colour on any page rather than just inserts of folded coloured A3 sheets within the body of the b/w pages.

Perhaps we can even look forward to a small amount of "drop-in" colour on b/w pages. This should also ease layout of colour material and give an added variety to an already well rounded publication. Well done, Will.

Yours enthusiastically,

TONY COWLEY (Cambridge)

Dear *Eagle Times*,

Earlier this year I saw and purchased the Virgin *Dan Dare* book by Garth Ennis and Gary Erskin. On first opening I was reasonably pleased but kept an open mind as we all know what some of these publications can be like. My first impressions on flicking through was - lots of colour.

I had a lot of problems relating Dan, Dig and Miss P. to Frank Hampson's original, but pressed on, shame none of the others were included. The Mekon, the Treens I thought were good, but Torrs not so good.

The hardware does not relate to any kind of development that may have followed from Space Fleet and it's a shame they don't explain what happened between America and China to make G.B. the main power on Earth.

Having said all that they have done their own version. I found it enjoyable, although I did fret a bit at the Dynamite Entertainment price.

Congratulations to the Team of *E.T.* for a fantastic publication.

Yours

BARRY KING

E.T. Thanks for your comments, Barry. The fact that Virgin have not published more *Dan Dare* books may speak for itself!

EAGLE Autographs - Part 6

POSTSCRIPT: THE EAGLE CLUB'S FIGUREHEADS

Eagle Club Vice-Presidents

Printed in our 1950s Autograph book are the signatures of six of the seven Vice-Presidents of the Eagle Club.
We reproduce this page - although they were no longer part of any Eagle Club when we began compiling our book!

Introduced in a mid-June 1954 Eagle the vice presidents were 'men whose achievements are outstanding'.
But, just how did Marcus Morris come to choose these men?
Choosing the sportsmen was probably fairly easy for the outstanding athlete and skilled ballroom dancer; however, one was a motor sport champion and two of them were aviators – one now turned by experience into a social worker and a charity founder.

Neville Duke was perceived as a daredevil display pilot – in reality a highly professional test pilot. A much-decorated Second World War fighter pilot by 1948, he had become the chief test pilot for the Hawker Aircraft Company.

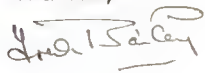
Neville Duke

Leonard Cheshire VC had been a courageous Second World War RAF bomber pilot, at one stage leading the 617 'Dambusters' squadron (immediately after Guy Gibson), and witnessing the dropping of the Nagasaki atom bomb as an official British government observer.
After the War he began a crusade to provide appropriate accommodation for disabled people affected by the War and, by 1948, this had resulted in the major charity, 'Leonard Cheshire Disability' – now the UK's leading provider of services for disabled people.

Leonard Cheshire

To 1950s Eagle readers these figureheads of the Eagle Club were representing the spirit of the whole concept, though it is rather ironic that the only signature missing is that of Stirling Moss, for he raced several cars bearing the Eagle logo, and he was the only vice-president ever to acknowledge the (rather inflicted) status. In 1954 Stirling was appointed Eagle Club Racing Driver and raced a Grand Prix Maserati and a Cooper Norton 500cc at the Silverstone circuit.

Trevor Bailey



Denis Compton

Godfrey Evans

Stirling Moss

Many sportsmen received nominations for the Eagle Sportsman of the Year, however of those who were also Vice Presidents only two, Stanley Matthews (1953 and 1956) and Stirling Moss(1957), obtained the accolade.
Other than this award the Vice Presidents took no active interest in Eagle or its Club.

Stanley Matthews

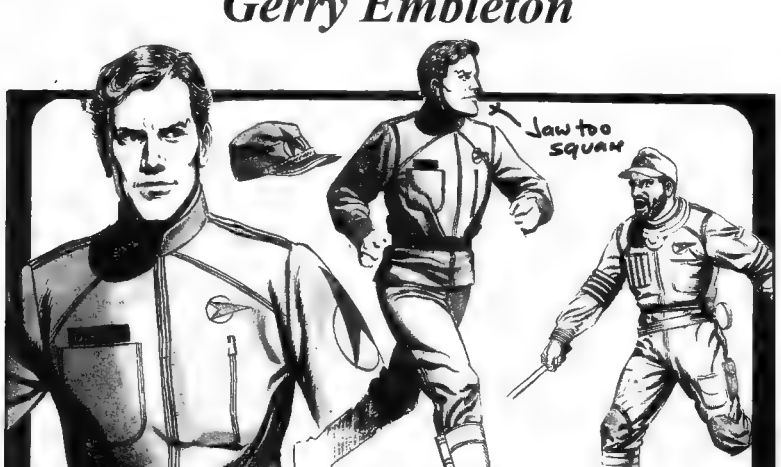
Simon Garrett once told me that Marcus Morris originally tried to get cricketer Len Hutton - then Captain of the English Cricket team - as a Vice President without success. Hutton would then have replaced one of the other cricketers.

Acknowledgements: All the autographs were made suitable for reproduction by David Gould. Cliff Maddock provided the Eagle's Men of Today/Girl's Personality Parade booklets used in Part 1.
Tony Cowley provided the page layouts for this series. ABP

What's in a name? PART 2

Alan Vincé concludes his look at the career of multi-talented

Gerry Embleton



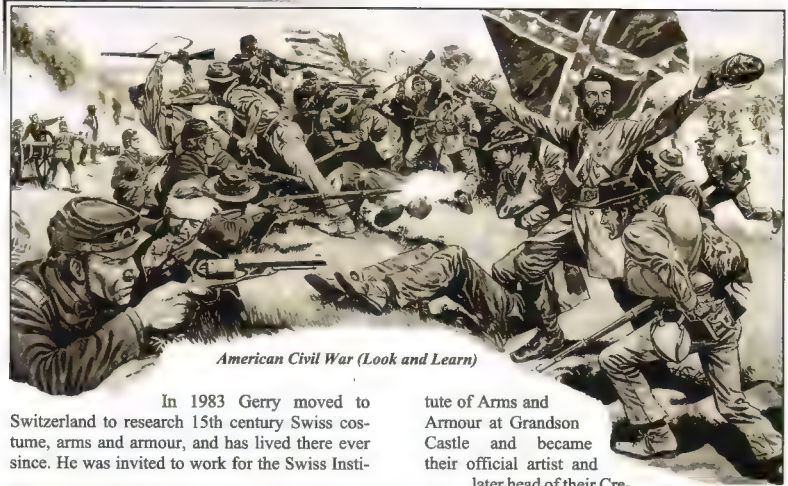
Rough ideas for the new Dan Dare

There had long been talk in the 1970s of a return for the famous Frank Hampson hero. Much of this had come in the wake of Frank's awards in 1975 and 1976, when the press was full of articles on Frank and the possible chance of him reviving his creation. Sadly, there was no way the copyright owners, IPC, were going to give Hampson that chance. They had already made some effort at a 'Dan Dare' comeback in 1977 with a *2000AD* character that was certainly not the space hero of the old *EAGLE*. This time, however, it was not only 'Dan Dare' but the *EAGLE* itself that IPC/Fleetway were going to breath fresh life into.

Dave Hunt, who had worked for Fleetway since the early 1960s, was to be the editor of this new *EAGLE* and he later recalled, they really needed "a name" artist to draw the strip. One name high on the list was Ron Embleton, who freely admitted to being tempted by the offer. In the end Ron turned it down but suggested his brother Gerry might be a good substitute, and Gerry agreed. Looking back Gerry feels a great chance was missed by IPC in their efforts to re-launch both 'Dan Dare' and *EAGLE*. "When first I heard of the new magazine I really hoped it was going to be just like the original, good quality paper and large format. When I saw the finished article I was very disappointed, it just wasn't up to the standard of the first *EAGLE*."

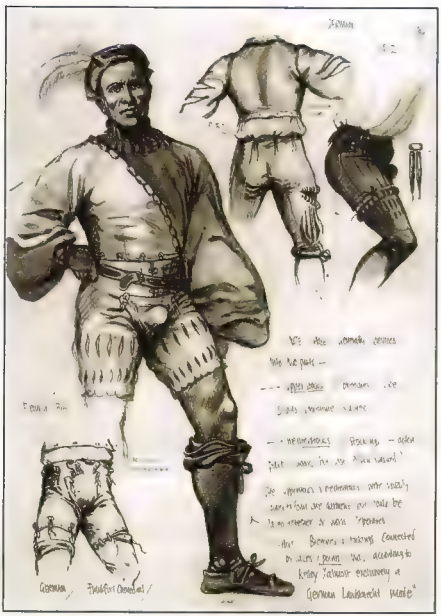
Although he quite liked the story, Gerry wasn't too unhappy when his time on the "new" 'Dan Dare' ended. He still feels a golden chance was lost to do real credit to the first 'Dan Dare'.

DAN DARE
RETURN of the MEKON
IT WAS 2210 A.D. THE PLANET EARTH LAY UNDER THE DOMINATION OF THE MEKON !
MEKONTAN SHIPS FILL THE SKIES !
AS LONG AS WE DRAW BREATH, WE KEEP ON FIGHTING !
ONLY TWELVE SQUADRONS AIRBORNE, SIR THE REST... NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND
EARTH'S ONLY HOPE... AND THEY KEPT US SITTING TWIDDLING OUR THUMBS ! IF ONLY THEY'D GIVEN US MORE TIME !
OBLITERATE IT !
SUCH WASTEFUL ACTION IS MOST UNCHARACTERISTIC, O MEKON, IF I MAY BE PERMITTED TO SAY SO.
YOU MAY NOT !
THAT INSIGNIFICANT PILE OF DUST. WHAT USE IS LUNA BASE TO ME ?
I AM INTERESTED ONLY IN THE MOTHER PLANET !
DAN ! HOW WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU !
FIVE YEARS TILL PLANET-FALL, DANIEL ! THAT'S ONE HUNK OF WAITING !
IT'LL SEEM LIKE FIVE MINUTES INSIDE THE SUSPENDED ANIMATION TANKS ! GOOD OLD EARTH ! IT'S GOING TO BE GREAT TO GET HOME !
YOU SAID IT !
NEXT WEEK: Earth at the mercy of The Mekon!



American Civil War (Look and Learn)

In 1983 Gerry moved to Switzerland to research 15th century Swiss costume, arms and armour, and has lived there ever since. He was invited to work for the Swiss Institute of Arms and Armour at Grandson Castle and became their official artist and later head of their Creative art Department. In 1988 he formed his own company, TMAG (Time Machine AG), which produces life-sized historical figures for exhibitions and museums. These are much more than mere mannequins in uniform as Gerry's displays put costumes into a historical context. His first big assignment was the refurbishment of Lenzburg Castle and the results were so well received that he won a European Prize and TMAG has produced figures and artwork for more than 60 museums and exhibitions to date.



Rough for a history book

Another historical drawing

Gerry feels it is a great pleasure to be able to bring the past alive and see the interest it kindles with

REPORT RELEASED THROUGH MARINEVILLE SECURITY PRESS CONTROL

Gerry Anderson's

STINGRAY

World Navy 236 Target submarine speeds through the deep water of the Pacific . . .

TARGET

ON THE SURFACE ABOVE, SUPER SUBMARINE STINGRAY PREPARED TO DIVE

TARGET CHIP IS IN POSITION TROY

OKAY, PHONES FLOOD Q.!

AT RATE SIX STINGRAY DESCENDING IN A CONTROLLED DIVE

PICKING UP THEIR SIGNALS YET, PHONES?

YEAH, VERY FAINT, BUT I'VE GOT THEM IN OUR SIGHTS!

IN THE ROCKY TERRAIN OF THE OCEAN BED STINGRAY PLAYS A DANGEROUS GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK WITH THE TARGET VEGES!

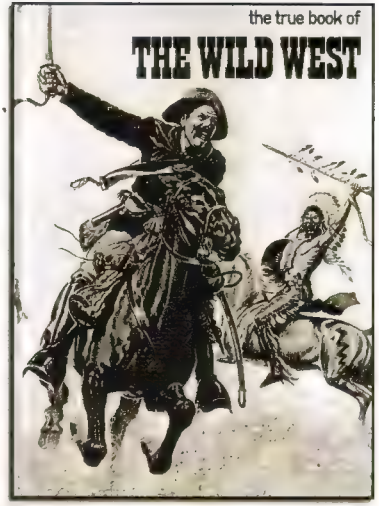
THERE SHE IS, TROY!

RIGHT, PHONES, PREPARE TO FIRE STING MISSILES ONE AND TWO!

people, especially school children. He feels that history can be the most boring subject in the curriculum yet it contains all that we were, and will be. He acts as an historical consultant for many exhibitions and museums around the world and is often off on trips in Europe and North America.

He even had a "minute" contribution to Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Gerry also finds time to work on an assortment of books, from 18th century North Americans to Wizards.

When he has the time, Gerry likes to watch the odd film or TV series that interests him. He singled out *Master and Commander* as an example of a very well made movie. "It was a brilliant interpretation, the feeling for historical accuracy and atmosphere was masterly." At the other end of the scale Gerry felt that the film *Braveheart* gets his award for the worst historical film, with not two minutes' worth of accuracy in the story! The *Sharpe* TV series was another he enjoyed but felt it also (historically) was nonsense. "If you closed your historian's eye it was enjoyable and certainly encouraged great interest in the subject."



Wild West book cover

I'VE SET THE COURSE FOR OUR SECTOR 25, STEVE.
CODE 561 ZERO BLUE.
FINE, MAT...
LET'S HOPE WE GET A QUIET TRIP...
AS COLONEL STEVE ZODIAC SPOKE, ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN ON THE PLANET OF ICE.
BEFORE ARCTAN CRASHES INTO THE SUN, OUR WEATHER MACHINE WILL FREEZE THE PLANET EARTH.

Fireball XL5 page

Gerry Embleton's talent and ability to turn his hand to so many aspects of visual art make him a unique survivor from those golden years of the British comic. It would seem a world away from 'Utah Renegades' in *Western Super Thriller Comics* to the stunning life-sized figures and sets produced by TMAG, but they all have that Embleton touch of class and distinction.

Gerry is now, officially, a Swiss citizen so I have met him only once. That sad time was his brother Ron's funeral in 1988. But his letters and our chats on the phone are still rewarding and we both have a great fondness for Ron and miss him still. Gerry still likes keeping an eye on the strip cartoon field and feels, sadly, that Britain has lost out to the continental artists for imagination and flair. Although it is some years since he illustrated 'Dan Dare' one can't help feeling that Gerry would love to have another crack at the strip: "Next time," he remarked, "I'd treat it rather differently!" ❄

EAGLE ANNUAL: *The Best of the 1960s Comic*

Edited by Daniel Tatarsky

A Book Review by Steve Winders

Daniel Tatarsky's latest "*Eagle Annual*" covers the period from 1960 until 1969 when *EAGLE* was merged into *Lion*. Slightly larger in size than its predecessors, *Eagle Annual of the 1950s* and *Eagle Annual of the Cutaways*, the new book has a shiny picture cover in keeping with *EAGLE*'s actual annuals of the mid and late sixties. The cover picture is of an astronaut on a space walk, an appropriate image from the sixties for a comic which showed such a strong interest in the exploration of space. The picture has been "doctored" however, with the Spacefleet emblem from the 'Dan Dare' strip being added to the astronaut's helmet and the *EAGLE* symbol itself appearing on his left arm!

As in Tatarsky's previous efforts the new annual has been artificially distressed to look like an old annual and like his *Annual of the 1950s* it contains single episodes from a range of strips mixed with a lot of text features and readers' contributions. There are also lots of advertisements from the sixties *EAGLE* to capture the flavour and the interests of the period. Despite producing a book devoted to *EAGLE*'s cutaway drawings last year, Tatarsky includes twenty two in this book. While no book about *EAGLE* would be complete without its famous cutaways, three of those included were also in last year's book and twenty two seems rather excessive when no room can be found for 'Blackbow the Cheyenne' or 'The Iron Man', two of the most popular strips in the sixties *EAGLE*.

To be fair the sixties *EAGLE* did feature a lot of different strip stories as changes of editor and owners dictated changes in content. At the start of the decade the well established 'Riders of the Range', 'Harris Tweed' and 'Luck of the Legion' were still running and all of these are represented by single episodes in the book. Sergeant Luck's inclusion makes up for his absence from the fifties volume. Of the later stories, Frank Bellamy's 'Fraser of Africa' and 'Heros the Spartan' are featured, as is Martin Aichison's 'Danger Unlimited' and 'The Lost World'. The other fictional strips included are 'Dan Dare' of course, 'Knights of The Road', 'Home of the Wanderers', 'Can You Catch a Crook?', 'The Guinea Pig', 'U.F.O. Agent' and the humorous 'XYZ Cars'. However there is no place for 'Cornelius Dimworthy', 'Fidosaurus', 'Mickey Merlin' or Johnny Frog'.

'Dan Dare' is represented with two pages by Frank Bellamy, one and a half pages from Don Harley and Bruce Cornwell, six pages by Keith Watson and a page by Desmond Walduck from 'Prisoners of Space', which originally appeared in *EAGLE* in 1954 and was reprinted in 1967 when new 'Dan Dare' stories were discontinued. There are five small front pages featuring Keith Watson's 'Moonsleepers' on a double page which includes a range of front covers. Despite Dan's high representation there is only one complete episode of his adventures included and this is the single page final episode of the saga when he becomes Controller of the Spacefleet. Another single page instalment of 'The Menace From Jupiter' has its final frame obscured by one of Daniel Tatarsky's commentary blocks, which are unfortunately more intrusive in this volume than in the previous books, covering several frames of artwork in the book.

Of the non-fiction strips Frank Hampson's 'Road of Courage' and Frank Bellamy's 'Montgomery of Alamein' are represented by two page montages. There is also a page from Peter Jackson's 'Gordon of Khartoum' and a page of 'Stonewall Jackson'. 'Last of the Saxon Kings' is represented by a line of strip across a double page shared with the fictional historical stories 'The Sword of Fate' and 'Captain Hornblower R.N.'.

In a volume which is really a scrapbook of the sixties *EAGLE* text features are potentially of more interest to the casual reader than extracts from strips because they are complete. However *EAGLE* was first and foremost an adventure strip weekly and this should and could be better represented in a book which celebrates it. The strip serials in the sixties *EAGLE* tended to be much shorter than in the fifties and it would have been possible to include several complete adventures alongside text features as the book runs for 194 pages. The book reproduces extracts from *EAGLE* in a roughly chronological order, but as in the previous publications the only dating is where the date on the original page has been reproduced. Many pieces are undated and the book would certainly have benefited from much more dating of the material.

Unfortunately a particularly weak aspect of the book is Daniel Tatarsky's Introduction, which he shares with Colin Frewin and which contains several inaccuracies. He comments on the changing relationship between the editor and the readers, stating that Marcus Morris' letters to readers were a "regular feature" during his editorship and claims that his successor Clifford Makins did not take up this mantel. His own selections for the book then proceed to prove him wrong, for he includes many letters from Clifford Makins to the readership.

He proceeds to speculate about *EAGLE*'s demise in 1969, concluding that the wide range of features included in the comic might have been responsible! He says " … it seems that *EAGLE* was trying to please everyone. Whilst you can do that some of the time it is … not possible to do that all of the time, and so like a star that burns too brightly the black hole that follows was inevitable."

Although he briefly outlines the various takeovers in an earlier part of his introduction, Tatarsky never makes the connection between these and the declining sales which threatened *EAGLE*'s continuation right from the major changes imposed by Leonard Matthews following the Mirror Group takeover in 1961. He makes no reference to *EAGLE*'s mergers with *Swift* and *Boys' World* and writes about certain features and strips running "alongside" each other when they were years apart. *EAGLE* went through several significant developments during the sixties and this book should explore them.

Tatarsky also makes a simple factual mistake regarding the creative development of 'Dan Dare', saying "Dan Dare … was passed like a baton … from … Frank Hampson to Frank Bellamy to Don Harley and Keith Watson, then to Bruce Cornwell." Of course Cornwell worked alongside Harley and then Watson took over, with Eric Kincaid drawing a final short strip between a series of repeats.

Not to be outdone, in his recollections about the 1960s Colin Frewin recalls listening to the repeat adventures of 'Dan Dare' on Radio Luxembourg. This series ran on Luxembourg from 1951 until 1956 and was never repeated, so he didn't hear them in the sixties.

Despite inaccuracies and negative observations it is pleasing to see at last a book which celebrates the sixties *EAGLE* and Daniel Tatarsky has made some particularly good choices of features for inclusion. Of the text features I enjoyed several of the Readers' Letters sections, especially those in which readers were invited to give their views on issues of the time. These included Comprehensive Schools and Pop Music. Their responses make for some interesting and sometimes unexpected responses. The Comprehensive Schools debate focused much more on mixed schools than equality of opportunity and standards, because for most children at the time established schools were single sex whereas new comprehensives were often mixed! Another interesting feature is an article by Frank Hampson about his trip to Palestine to research his 'Road of Courage' strip. There is also a fairly accurate 'Futurescope' article predicting the computer boom and another about how space technology could be utilised to help produce food for the growing population of Earth. Two 'Man From Eagle' articles examine aspects of the exploration of space and there are some detailed features from 1966 about the lead up to the World Cup. I wish the book had been closer to the size of the original Eagle though as some of the small writing is difficult to read in its reduced format. ❁

An EAGLE Wordsearch

compiled by David Gould

1. **Fat Batman**
2. **Great Sailor**
3. **Lost World Author**
4. **Natural History by George!**
5. **Charles the Great's Brother**
6. **Assistant Artist Tomlinson**
7. **Chief Sub on Eagle**
8. **Shepherd King**
9. **One of the Franks**
10. **WEB founder**

C	N	D	I	V	A	D	A
O	A	A	J	E	B	T	F
I	M	N	F	A	E	R	D
T	O	L	S	R	L	N	I
A	L	L	G	D	L	O	G
R	R	O	C	S	A	L	B
O	A	Y	L	D	M	L	Y
H	C	D	D	O	Y	L	E

Cross through the words as you find them. The remaining letters spell out a Western hero.

Pop Music During *EAGLE* Times *Part 18*

by ***John Kobylecky***

Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band - Beatles

1967 deserved to be remembered for a lot of things but in summation three images stood out .... a rifle with a flower poking out of the gun barrel ... the cover-sleeve of the album *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* ... a deathly black mound at the point of expiry that may just have once been a sea-bird.

The flower poking out of the top of the gun barrel gave emphasis to the slogan "make love not war" and hinted at the latent power of the flower. Or flower-power, if you will. The idea had originally given birth in America, and more specifically the west coast of America, whence it sprung in symbiosis with a growing disenchantment with the Vietnam war. Onto this was grafted the decidedly hedonistic lifestyle of the hippy generation, who were determined to find an alternative to established suburban norms, and found sanctuary in a series of communes in which the notion of the traditional nuclear family was eschewed in favour of a revolving series of sexual couplings within the agreed grouping. The notion of making love not war thus became entangled in the basic physical act in its most literal sense. Teenagers on this side of the Pond did not necessarily buy into the entire package – the weather here was never conducive to the degrees of sheer nudity the promulgators of the fashion employed – but weren't going to turn down the idea of more sex. The continuing rise and rise of the use of the contraceptive pill encouraged promiscuity in any case, and if the haphazard couplings were going to help put an end to an ill-considered war, then who was going to stand in the way of the next one-night stand. The summer of love was a real winner.

Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was a fitting anthem to the steamy events, and the weird, psychedelic cover aptly paraphrased the time, the place, and the music. It was not a total volte-face. The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* had sampled this territory in 1966, but the Beatles' album proved influential in some pivotal aspects. The album made use of stereo sound in a manner which was crucial to the sound-track and achieved an ambience of music which had everything to do with post-production work in the mixing studio ... it was music the Beatles were never going to reproduce faithfully on the live stage. Beyond this, the album opened the door still further to the progressive music scene in which the likes of Pink Floyd, Yes, Genesis, Led Zeppelin and Fleetwood Mac were to experiment.

The deathly black mound at the point of expiry came courtesy of the good ship *Torrey Canyon* that disgorged its oily contents onto southern British beaches in time for the holiday season. It gave emphasis to man's detrimental effects on the body-planet and chimed in with the growing notion of Earth as an increasingly small and fragile object in space, as witnessed by ever more distant astronauts looking back in their quest to reach the moon. All in all, it was enough to turn a colour into a political movement. Meanwhile, a tiny island that had had four million car drivers in 1958 was going to have 11 million by 1968, and visiting oil tankers were destined to remain a fact of economic life, lest we started drilling our own.

An examination of the best-selling singles of 1967 revealed the following:-

1	**Release Me** – Engelbert Humperdinck	1365
2	**The Last Waltz** – Engelbert Humperdinck	1160
3	**A Whiter Shade of Pale** Procol Harum	820
4	**There Goes My Everything**–E Humperdinck	765
5	**I'm a Believer** – Monkees	725
6	**Just Loving You** – Anita Harris	635
7	**Puppet on a String** – Sandie Shaw	597
8	**Hello Goodbye** – Beatles	575
9	**All You Need is Love** Beatles	570
10	**Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields** – Beatles	563
11	**This is My Song** – Petula Clark	536
12	**Something Stupid** – Frank & Nancy Sinatra	528
13	**Silence is Golden** – Tremeloes	514
14	**Massachusetts** – Bee Gees	510
15	**San Francisco** – Scott MacKenzie	498
16	**I'll Never Fall in Love Again** – Tom Jones	497
17	**Let the Heartaches Begin**–Long John Baldry	495
18	**Baby, Now That I've found You**-Foundations	438
19	**If the Whole World** – Val Doonican	430
20	**There Must be a Way** – Frankie Vaughan	372

Engelbert Humperdinck entered the charts in the third week of January and remained for the rest of 1967. His two million sellers both spent six weeks at Number One, and the other, a month as runner-up to Procol Harum. Humperdinck belonged to the same management stable as Tom Jones and was a singer in a similar vein. Born Arnold Dorsey, he had originally

Engelbert Humperdinck

sought fame and found success of a sort with an appearance in *Oh Boy!* in 1958, but nothing on the scale of this. **Release Me** spent 56 weeks inside the Top Fifty.

A Whiter Shade of Pale also spent six weeks at the top in early summer, hinting at the kind of alternative music that *Sgt. Pepper* was soon going to usher in. It never had the liberal staying power of any of the Humperdinck discs but achieved a level of peak sales better than any other this year, selling 380,000 copies in sixteen days. Ironically, the Beatles themselves had presaged *Sgt. Pepper* with the decidedly experimental **Strawberry Fields Forever**, only to fall foul of the aforementioned Mr Dorsey.

The Monkees' **I'm a Believer** traded heavily on the zany comedy half-hour shows featuring the four boys, imported from America. They were well placed for family viewing at tea-time on the BBC and showcased the boys' talents to the utmost, inasmuch as these didn't necessarily extend to actually playing their own (assumed) musical instruments. The format may have owed its derivation to the anarchism of the earlier Beatles' films – the package couldn't withstand too much dissection – although if this was so, was teenage rebellion in a decidedly wholesome, toothsome, sweetly frivolous sort of way ... the leading anarchist sporting a bobble-hat. The Monkees were the idea of Hollywood producers Robert Rafelson and Bert Schneider who placed an advertisement for "four insane boys" and received 473 applicants. Of these, Englishman Davy Jones at least boasted definite previous stage experience, having once shared the television screen with *Coronation Street*'s Violet Carson (Ena Sharples), playing her grandson!

Sandie Shaw's **Puppet on a String** won the *Eurovision Song Contest* by a country mile, and spent three weeks at No. 1 in June. For a long time it seemed certain to remain the best-selling single of the year by a female artist, only to be eventually overhauled by Anita Harris. The latter peaked at no higher than No. 7 with **Just Loving You** but spent a year inside the Top 100. Long lived hits seemed to be the order of the day and Anita Harris herself had to defer to the remarkable Mike Sammes Singers whose love theme from *Dr. Zhivago* – **Somewhere My Love** – persevered in the lists from September 1966 to June 1968 (peak position No. 22).

Sandie Shaw

Anita Harris

Hello Goodbye was the Christmas No. 1, spending six weeks at the top into 1968. The sales figure shown here reflects that necessary sales split and the disc would have been placed at No. 4 in the annual list if all its '68 sales were included. All in all the Beatles were entirely dominant at Yuletide. A Christmas TV special showcased their latest musical experiment *Magical Mystery Tour* and the attendant exquisitely timed EP found its way into many a Christmas stocking, at the last possible moment, or the subject of immediate exchange of record token gifts. Sales were split 50/50 over the two year-ends and would have placed the disc at No. 9 in 1967 or No. 3 in 1968, if added together.

Split sales also played a major factor in the placing of **This is My Song** at No. 11 which sold over 800,000 copies between two artists, Petula Clark and Harry Secombe. The song had a remarkable antecedence, having been penned by 77-year old Charlie Chaplin as a means for Sophia Loren and Marlon Brando to bill and coo in the film *A Countess for Hong Kong*. No doubt about it; in 1967 love songs were definitely In, and the Clark version spent a fortnight at No. 1 to Secombe's peak at No. 2.

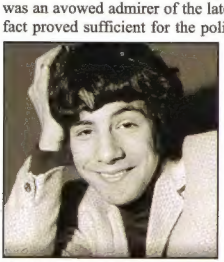
A No. 1 from April, **Something Stupid**, was a song from the same stable, although had the bizarre incongruity of being a love duet sung by father and daughter, and – what's more - by a father and daughter famous for not getting on. Proof of the pudding came in the eating, and the duo never sought to repeat this undoubted success with any kind of follow-up whatsoever, Nancy preferring to go off and do her own thing in a series of duets with Lee Hazelwood. Father did not necessarily approve of him either but may have had the last laugh, the entire record issue mentioned in this paragraph appearing on the Reprise label, which he owned.

Communal love and private passion was the keynote of the stand-alone moment of 1967, the first globally-linked TV show called *Our World*. In essence a glorified promotional video for **All You Need is Love**, the performance sloganised once and for all the mores and morals of the year, the summer of love, and all that.

The Beatles nominally starred, but the studios boasted a considerable array of friends, lovers and various acquaintances who joined in the extended refrain, repeating the mantra and almost slipping into chant. Such was the tour de force, surprisingly it spent only three weeks at No. 1.

January: Taking the year chronologically, Jimi Hendrix made his first appearance in the first chart of 1967 with his debut single **Hey Joe**. In his native America Hendrix's profile was not so great as it was here, and the single's success chimed neatly with a front-line tour arranged at the behest of Chas Chandler, a former Animal's bassist, and Hendrix's producer/manager. Seven minutes were axed from the recording of *Juke Box Jury*, which went out on the 7th. Apparently there had been a somewhat intellectual and learned discussion between the all D. J. panel about pop music and censorship as it related to the release of **The Addicted Man** by Game which the BBC decreed was best kept censored.

February: 'Telstar' producer/songwriter Joe Meek was found shot outside his home on the 3rd – the eighth anniversary of the death of Buddy Holly. The deceased was an avowed admirer of the late American, and this fact proved sufficient for the police to not take much further action. Cat Stevens' **Matthew and Son** came a very distant runner-up to the Monkees in the charts, and Tom Jones was presented with a gold disc for **Green, Green Grass** at *Sunday Night at the London Palladium.*



Cat Stevens

March: Consternation for all Monkees' fans that Davy Jones had been passed A-1 by the US medical board, prior to the draft. It was not all bad news. RCA rush-released **Last Train to Clarksville** for any loyal fans wishing to vent their sympathy and support at the cash-tills, and absolute military induction was put on hold pending further psychological and educational tests. However, undoubtedly covering their bets on a valuable asset, the management team already had 20 year old Tim Rooney – son of actor Mickey - lined up as replacement should the worst come to the worst. Vince Hill performed a near miracle in taking **Edelweiss** within one rung of the summit, what with Hump, the Beatles and various My songs in competition. Clearly, the higher profile the number carried via its antecedence in *The Sound of Music* did no harm whatsoever.

Monkees

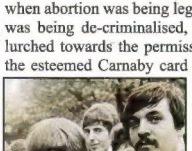
April: British Rail put up a special train service on the 8th to get primarily young, primarily female music fans to a very special gig in London… it was called *The Monkees' Express*. Donovan pulled his US million selling **Epistle to Dippy** because he couldn't be having with censorship hassles about lyrics being taken to imply drug-taking. The latter, it had to be added, was clearly of moment at the time following the arrest of various Rolling Stones, and Marianne Faithfull. Paul Jones' starring vehicle *Privilege* most certainly reflected on these various aspects of current youth culture, and Elvis Presley's *Easy Come, Easy Go* most certainly didn't. The former took **I've Been a Bad, Bad Boy** to No. 5 and the latter took **Love Machine** to No. 38. From here Presley's next discernible step was up the aisle with 23-year old Priscilla Beaulieu.

May: Neil Diamond penned two top ten hits: **A Little Bit Me, a Little Bit You** for the Monkees, and **The Boat That I Row** for Lulu. The former peaked at No. 3 adjacent to **Dedicated to the One I Love** by the Mamas and the Papas, and the latter reached No. 6. Davy Jones' aforementioned tests saw him reclassified as 2A and therefore unfit for military duty… hope he took that as a compliment. Meanwhile, the Beach Boys' Carl Wilson found himself in prison on a charge of dodging the draft, and having to cancel his Monterey music festival appearance, forthwith.

Neil Diamond

June: *Sgt. Pepper* was released on the 1st. BBC executives evidently went through the entire work with an extreme fine tooth comb, upon the assumption that there was bound to be something within which to object. Result: **A Day in the Life** was banned from all BBC airwaves because it was both an enticement and an inducement to drug taking, they said. Here, the offending line was "A man goes upstairs on a bus for a smoke." Meanwhile, it seemed strange that nothing seemed strange to the censors about the weird and extravagant **Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds**, for which the decided use of the Melotron in earlier **Strawberry Fields** ought to have given a hint. We wondered anew about the exact age of these rulers of good taste and decency, especially in the light of the yet further clues given in an interview with Paul McCartney in which he admitted to sampling LSD. The Monkees took **Alternate Title** to No. 2 by way of protest at the censorship of the original title **Randy Scouse Git** … meanwhile punters could check out the rough terminology on TV via various episodes of *Till Death Us Do Part.*

July: The essence of alternative cultures on a collision course was defined once and for all on the 7th with the three months prison term imposed on Mick Jagger for possession of drugs. What had been found on his person, specifically, were four Benzedrine type tablets purchased over the counter in Italy as a remedy for travel sickness. The editor of *The Times* thought long and hard about this sentence before musing on the undue severity of the prison terms. It was a line hinting at over-reaction on the part of the establishment which was similarly echoed in the coming days by all other major newspapers … except the *Daily Mail*. At a time when abortion was being legalised and homo-sexuality was being de-criminalised, British society positively lurched towards the permissive. Now, any holders of the esteemed Carnaby card could walk into any boutique and night-club – totally unannounced – and seek to parade themselves in the most bizarre and garish apparel that fashion could imagine. Man or woman, it mattered not; it seemed we were in danger of begetting a nation of Quentin Crisps, and more befuddled parents than ever were increasingly being given to wonder just what was up there performing on *Top of the Pops*, behind the extreme heads of hair. Now, perhaps, it was time to learn the bitter truth about Randolph Scott. Bravely, perversely, the BBC held the line, slapping a ban on the Easybeats' **Heaven and Hell** for the line "discovering someone else in your bed." With Ray Royer (guitar) and Bobby Harrison (drums) quitting, an awful lot of Procol Harum were suddenly going their separate ways. It wasn't even as if 'Whiter Shade' had yet vacated the Top Ten.



Procol Harum

August: With the summer of love still going pell-mell, it was fitting that **All You Need Is Love** should be replaced at the top by **San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)**. However, full marks to the Flowerpot Men which was the tailored nomenclature of a group of totally anonymous session men who put together **Let's Go to San Francisco** so as to ride on the back – No. 5 – of prevailing fashion. Clearly, at last, it was now time to find out just exactly who stood where in this new cultural order. The *Melody Maker* published a major spread aimed at discovering who was hip and who was merely pretending. There were several questions. Answer them right, and you definitely weren't square. Do better, and you could be cool. Achieve peak performance and you just might qualify as one of the beautiful people themselves and be shipped off to Santa Monica. Typical poser … Question 13. Who should be the next Prime Minister: a) Harold Wilson b) Edward Heath c) Suzy Cream-Cheese. The last *Top of the Pops* of the month (26th airing) banned the promotional video of the Rolling Stones' **We Love You**, originally penned by Jagger & Co. during the court outing itself. The video featured Mick Jagger as Oscar Wilde and Marianne Faithfull as Dorian Gray. Wisely filmed in colour, the item clearly had a constituency in mind that was wider than the confines of Broadcasting House. It peaked at No. 4. Prior to this the pirate ships broadcast their last programmes on the 15th with Radio London pointedly putting **Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds** at the top of their final Fab Forty. Although a commercial impossibility, it at least meant that the authorities would catch the sight of a couple of fingers in the hand that waved a fond farewell. Meanwhile, the original off-shore broadcaster – Radio Caroline – bravely vowed to transmit on.

Scott McKenzie

September: … and time to go back to school. Spare a thought for Maureen, Jacqueline and Shirley who spent their hols writing out the line "Please let us meet the Monkees" 61,309 times, sending the entreaty to the *NME* at a postage cost of 5/-. The latter was not an inconsiderable sum for a young girl, and at the end of it all we never found that it did any good. Sad. Beatles impresario Brian Epstein was found dead inside his London pad on the 2nd at the age of 32; reasons never explained. The proposed arrival of the Mamas and the Papas never materialised following speculation about the future of the group as a group, upon which this non-arrival added fuel. Instead we received with suitable awe the West Coast's most extreme export, the Mothers of Invention, who under the guidance of leader Frank Zappa wrung out the notion of flower-power until the sap wept, before a suitably dumb-struck Royal Albert Hall audience. Beyond this – and believe me there was a beyond this – Jimi Hendrix was due to head our way again, having been prevailed upon to leave the States by the influential woman's league The Daughters of the American Revolution. *Dee Time* replaced *Juke Box Jury* on the prime Saturday night spot, with the latter shifted to Wednesday. ATV countered by signing up Engelbert Humperdinck to a series of music specials, a relief in the wake of repeated news bulletins on Radio Caroline that told of his death on the M1, following the crash of his newly acquired steel grey Jag.

Tremeloes

Tony Blackburn

Radio One began broadcasting on the very last day of the month, courtesy of Tony Blackburn's 7 a.m. show. It was all part of a big shake-up which had seen the Home Service and the Third and Light programme ditched in favour of Radios One, Two, Three & Four. **Flowers in the Rain** by Move was the very first record to be played – a somewhat brave choice in view of the Prime Minister's successful court injunction against the group on the 16th precluding them from issuing postcards in promotion of the record – and the Bee Gees' **Massachusetts** was next. The former peaked in the runner-up position to the latter's No. 1.

October: Major announcement. Cliff Richard officially rescinded his earlier decision to leave the music scene in favour of religious teaching, feeling quite able and happy to manage the two disciplines in concert. However, we still didn't know what had become of his previously announced cinema project to highlight the evils of war … with more than a passing nod towards the situation in Vietnam, with the aid of the Shadows. Likewise stalled was the plan to star Anita Harris in a series in the idiom of the *Man from Uncle* and *The Avengers*, with Anita in the Diana Rigg role. It seemed that the Americans were still keen but quarantine laws continued to make it difficult for Ms Harris to get her Afghan hound "Albert" out of this country – an absolute requirement if she was going to insist on this item as her co-star. Meanwhile, the dusky maid passed the time in a series of *Carry Ons*, belly dancing to aplomb, for instance, in *Follow That Camel*. The Beatles arrived back on this planet after a long sojourn with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the far, far-out East. The Maharishi excelled at something he styled transcendental meditation and George Harrison's American bride had been sufficiently impressed to corral together all four of the lads, in tow. Mercifully, trying to explain how a vacant stare could be translated into transcendental meditation is beyond the remit of this article, but the Fab Four undoubtedly came back with longer, less manicured hair and more garishly coloured costumes. Just how iridescent were these kaftans going to get? Back home, they moved at once into a sixty-seater bus – coloured bright yellow and blue, of course – as part of a magical mystery tour of the environs twixt London and Land's End. Many impromptu stops were promised along the way as the Beatles sought out the more weird and wonderful sights of the West, using their newly acquired transcendental insight.

Bee Gees

November: Cold autumn winds presaging winter? Stevie Winwood's Traffic show-cased **Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush** taken from the film of the same name. It was certainly hip and was undoubtedly zany but all of a sudden it was recounting summer days which were now gone. On the 2nd December the Hollies' Graham Nash telegraphed back that the flower-power movement was now dead in San Francisco and all the beautiful people had followed the sun, decamping south to Mexico. Over here, chill weather set in rather sooner and on the 28th October the flower-power mecca at Tottenham Court Road, the U.F.O., closed its doors for the last time … having first opened in Christmas 1966. Wisely, Island records had issued the Traffic single in a uniquely designed, iridescently coloured and especially psychedelic record sleeve – in the style of *Sgt. Pepper*. The special issue was limited to the first 100,000 copies and the record most probably sold 100,000 as it peaked at number 13. In the *Melody Maker* reader's poll Engelbert Humperdinck was not included in the first ten of the year's top male vocal artists which had Cliff at its head and likewise, Dusty Springfield was moved to place an advert in the musical press congratulating Lulu on her poll victory. Meanwhile, the Press Council finally brought the *Melody Maker* before the bench for its 27th May article informing the reader that drugs like LSD and marijuana were an integral part of the hippy scene.

December: The BBC aired the last edition of *Juke Box Jury* on the 20th and Bobby Vee and Pete Murray were among the high octane panel. The Beatles' **Hello Goodbye** was one of the discs rather superfluously given consideration – it was already No. 1 at the time – although it did allow the corporation opportunity to ban a previously arranged promotion film clip. A day later, *Half a sixpence* opened in Shaftsbury Avenue where Tommy Steele premiered **Flash, Bang, Wallop!** This did affect the pound in his pocket … following the devaluation of sterling, Tom Jones found that his highly touted one million dollar contract for a thirteen week stay in Las Vegas had suddenly grown from £357,000 to £417,000. Similarly re-calibrated, Long John Baldry was put under the measuring tape and found to be 6 ft. 6 in. where earlier publicists had boasted of 6 ft. 7 in! ❄

Long John Baldry

EAGLE WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
FOURPENCE
EVERY FRIDAY
EAGLE
DAN DARE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE
THE RANGER, MOTHER SHIP OF THE THREE ROCKETS STILL ORBITS VENUS, WAITING IN VAIN FOR SAFARIS FROM DAN AND HIS FRIENDS
SEND A SIGNAL — CAPT. HUNTER OF "RANGER" TO EARTH SPACE FLEET — NO SIGHT OR SOUND FROM DARE EXPEDITION — BATHING ALMOST U/S. CAN MANAGE MOTIONS, BUT ONLY STAY WERE ONE MORE EARTH DAY — ORDERS PLEASE
POOR OLD DAN — IT'S HOPELESS! — WHAT A WRETCHED MISSILE!
FINE PLACE TO SPEND XMAS EVE! 150 MILLION MILES FROM HOME!
WON'T BE MUCH USE HANGING OUT OUR STOCKINGS UP HERE
AND ON EARTH—
RANGER SENDS XMAS GREETINGS AS SHE STILLS OUT OF ORBIT
"IN GRAND OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS MANNER WE SENDS A TELL HER TO RETURN TO EARTH
SPACE FLEET H.Q. RETURNS TO ANNOUNCE THAT THERE CAN NOW BE NO HOPE FOR THE CREWS OF THE THREE ROCKET-SHIPS THAT RECENTLY ATTEMPTED A LANDING ON VENUS — THE PRICE OF TURNEYS THIS YEAR REACHED A NEW ALL TIME HIGH RECORD
IT'LL SEEM QUIET THIS CHRISTMAS WITHOUT OUR ALBERT ON LEAVE ANASTASIA
MM, WE'LL BE ENJOYING OURSELVES, I'LL BE BOUND
AND AT THIS TIME LET US REMEMBER OUR ABSENT MESS-MATES. THE CONTROLLER, DAN, HARRI AND PIERRE! GOOD LUCK TO THEM, WHEREVER THEY MAY BE!
HEAR, HEAR!

ET Layout and Cover Design: Will Grenham